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ABSTRACT

This document is one of a series of reports which describe the experiences of six state agencies that are developing systems to affect the development and implementation of policy in the federal/state program for vocational rehabilitation. The state programs are developing model program evaluation/management information support units. This second issuance of Observations contains an outline supported by flow charts and summaries of Delaware's case review process. Oregon's deployment of staff in tracking issues is described and illustrated with an example of the technique at work. An interim report from Michigan examines the program evaluator's role as consultant through two case histories. Virginia's approach to evaluation uses team techinques employing both evaluation staff and program personnel. Pennsylvania's contribution describes the structure of its case review process in terms of regional and district roles. West Virginia describes an ongoing study of the pros and cons of using benefit-cost analysis in vocational rehabilitation. Mississippi suggests that development of a management information system might well precede attempts at evaluation. The report concludes with a review, contributed by West Virginia, of a new handbook in human services evaluation, and a bibliography. (KC)

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ED199458

Program Evaluation in Vocational Rehabilitation:

OBSERVATIONS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
Rehabilitation Services Administration

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

In the first edition of this publication, we told you about the six State agencies for vocational rehabilitation under contract with the Department of Education to develop model evaluation units. From the Department's standpoint, these contracts have legal reference numbers for purposes of identification. Should you wish to make inquiry to the Federal agency funding these contracts, these numbers should be used. Below are listed the six States with their contract numbers.

States	Contract Numbers
Delaware	105-78-4006
Michigan	105-78-4008
Mississippi	105-78-4005
Oregon	105-78-4007
Pennsylvania	105-78-4009
Virginia	105-78-4017

James E. Taylor, Ph.D.
Project Officer, RSA

PREFACE

The primary purpose of this series of reports is to document the experiences of six State agencies that are developing systems to impact upon the development and implementation of policy in the Federal/State program for vocational rehabilitation.

On October 1, 1978, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) entered into a contractual agreement (one year duration with the option for two additional years) with six State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agencies to develop model program evaluation/management information support units. The contracts were awarded on the basis of the technical merit of proposals submitted in response to a Request For Proposals (RFP). The States receiving the contracts were:

Delaware (a small general agency)
Oregon (a small general agency)
Michigan (a medium sized general agency)
Virginia (a medium sized general agency)
Pennsylvania (a large general agency)
Mississippi (an agency for the blind)

The objectives for the Model Evaluation Units (MEUs) were to: 1) develop a model in which comprehensive program and policy systems were linked by appropriate evaluation data; 2) field test and evaluate the effectiveness of the (revised) Federal Program Evaluation Standards and the Facilities Information System for VR agency management; 3) build new evaluation capacity which can be generalized to other States; and 4) develop linkages for a within-State agency and between-State agency network for communication, dissemination and utilization of evaluation topics, with special emphasis on developing and testing the Model Evaluation Units.

In order to meet these objectives, the Model Evaluation Units were required by their first year's contract to perform the following tasks:

1. Plan and organize the Model Evaluation Units;
2. Initiate and establish continuing working relationships with associated organizations, contractors and university resources;
3. Administratively monitor the organization of the Evaluation Unit;
4. Field Test the new (revised) Federal Program Evaluation Standards;
5. Field Test the Vocational/Medical Facilities Information System;
6. Develop New Evaluation Capacity;
7. Assure dissemination and utilization products;
8. Evaluate the project, and
9. Submit yearly and final reports.

On October 1, 1971, RSA, after competitive bidding, awarded a contract to the West Virginia Research and Training Center (WVRTC) to coordinate the activities, of MEU development. The primary functional responsibilities of the WVRTC are to provide coordination, promote technical assistance, monitor activities, develop models, conduct evaluations, and prepare articles and other materials for dissemination. The specific tasks of the WVRTC for the most part coincide with those of the MEUs; however, additional tasks include the development of a regional office (RSA) model for the use of evaluation data generated by State VR agencies and the development of a set of manuscripts that will be instructive to other agencies who want to incorporate MEU concepts/products into their program evaluation units.

Two other contracts have been awarded by RSA to provide specialized assistance for Tasks 4 and 5. Task 4, to pretest the New (Revised) Federal Program Evaluation Standards, will be facilitated by Berkeley Planning Associates (BPA). BPA developed the new standards under a previous contract with RSA. Their involvement with the MEUs includes the pretesting and refinement of the proposed performance, procedural, and project standards. Activities will include designing instruments for data gathering, training the States in instrument use, coordinating the pretest, analyzing the data, revising standards as necessary, and preparing an implementation plan.

Walker Associates, (WA), under an agreement with the National Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, will be providing specialized assistance to the Model Evaluation Units in the conduct of Task 5 - Pretest the Facilities Information System (FIS). The FIS was developed by WA under a previous contract with RSA. The major tasks that WA will be conducting include training for MEUs in the use of the FIS, pretest implementation assistance, monitoring and evaluation of the pretest experience, revision of the system where necessary, and the development of recommendations for nationwide implementation.

The reports of this project will contain (a) issue papers that raise questions and suggest answers in generic evaluation problems; (b) descriptive reports of the methods employed and results of particular evaluation studies; (c) "how to do it" articles; and (d) reports documenting the experience of the various staffs. These reports will be published quarterly for a period of three (3) years.

This second issuance of observations contains an outline supported by flow charts and summaries of Delaware's case review process. Oregon's deployment of staff in tracking issues is described and illustrated with an example of the technique at work. An interim report from Michigan examines the program evaluator's role as consultant through two case histories. Virginia's approach to evaluation uses team techniques employing both evaluation staff and program personnel. Pennsylvania's contribution describes the structure of its case review process in terms of regional and district roles. West Virginia describes an ongoing study of

the pros and cons of using benefit-cost analysis in vocational rehabilitation. Mississippi suggests that development of a management information system might well precede attempts at evaluation.

Number 2 in our series concludes with a review, contributed by West Virginia, of a valuable new handbook in human services evaluation -- which will join our bibliography of pertinent literature.

Richard A. Nida
Project Officer
December 1980

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THE CASE REVIEW SCHEDULE PROCESS IN DELAWARE

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INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSIONS

The job of a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor is a many-faceted one. It is possible, however, to divide the various functions and activities into two broad categories.

Technical or Procedural - Certain elements of a counselor's job are standardized by Federal and state regulations and procedures. These are generally delineated in a casework manual and the application of individual judgment is held to a minimum. Like any other set of regulations, the ones that apply to the VR process are subject to interpretation but it is expected that most of these are resolved through actual application over time.

Judgmental - A large segment of the counselor's activities could be described as more subjective, as the services provided are provided to individuals. One cannot standardize the actions and reactions of human beings and the individual skills and knowledge of the counselor in handling the specific problems of a client will always be most significant.

Given this dichotomy of counselor activities, the Case Review Schedule (CRS) applies primarily to the "Technical or Procedural" component. The stated purpose of the CRS is to meet the following three primary objectives:

1. to determine conformance of case documentation with Federal regulations and guidelines,

2. to be utilized as a supervisory tool for feedback to rehabilitation counselors on case documentation and case practices, and

3. to be used as a management tool in the determination of recommendations and modifications in case service documentation and practices.

THE CASE REVIEW SCHEDULE (CRS) PROCESS IN DELAWARE

After Delaware DVR first learned of the San Diego Case Review Schedule at a Program Evaluation Conference held in Syracuse, N. Y., in May 1978, the Agency decided to investigate the use of this instrument to evaluate compliance with Federal regulations and guidelines. As an

aid to the counseling staff, the CRS process subsequently demonstrated its merit for training and helping delineate responsibilities of the vocational rehabilitation counselor and supervisor. Later, after DVR was awarded the ME/MI contract, a second use for the CRS process was determined. It was identified as a feasible instrument for gathering data for Task IV of the Model Evaluation Unit contract--pretesting of the new Secretary's General Standards.

From the outset, the Agency has considered the CRS a management tool and as a procedure monitoring device--not as a method to evaluate individual counselor performance.

Thus far, Delaware DVR has provided CRS training to key administrative staff, all casework supervisors, and all counselors, thereby becoming the only State Agency, to date, to provide its counselors with such training in the use of this nationwide, standardized case review instrument. San Diego State University CRS staff has been the sole trainer and consultant throughout the CRS process in Delaware.

Analysis of the data reviewed in Fiscal Year 1979 has shown that the Agency is doing an acceptable job in meeting the requirements set forth by the Federal regulations. It is hoped that when additional data become available, improvements will be realized in those areas where weaknesses have been identified. These improvements would be due to the fact that the total staff has been trained in using the CRS.

The impact of the CRS on the Agency decision-making process has been substantial. The original twelve reviewers (represented by five counselors, four casework supervisors, and three Central Office staff) became members of the CRS Committee selected by Agency administration to recommend a plan of action with respect to the findings that resulted from the CRS review. At the moment, the approved recommendations are either planned with definite dates for implementation or havealready been implemented. (See Table 1.) The Casework Manual has been revised, procedures have been clarified, training has taken place to correct weaknesses, and priorities as they relate to these items have been established. The CRS has proved to be an excellent tool to identify strengths and weaknesses within the casework process.

TECHNICAL DISCUSSION

Two required basic concepts outlined by the CRS Program of San Diego State University have been considered in preparing for Delaware's CRS application on a continuous basis:

A. Random Sampling: The application of the CRS is designed to take a representative sample of selected cases from the State VR Agency as the CRS is not designed to be used on every case processed through the VR system.

B. Reliability: The reliability design has been built into the application of the CRS so that consistency among reviewers can be determined throughout the application process. The "reliability" factor will also pinpoint areas where further training will be needed.

The CRS application process can be presented in four steps:

1. Planning
2. Review
3. Analysis of Data
4. Follow-Up

These four steps are specified in the attached series of charts. From Planning to Follow-Up, the San Diego State University CRS Project Staff has provided technical assistance and assumed responsibility for the processing of data. Specifically, they have provided technical assistance in sample selection, study design, the CRS materials, analysis of data, and technical reports.

Before the Planning phase could begin, the Agency administration had to make decisions regarding:

A. The sample characteristic for the selection of cases, i.e. open or closed cases. Closed cases (Statuses 26 and 28) recommended by the CRS Committee for FY-80 review.

B. Selection of the reviewers. CRS Committee recommended utilization of the 12 original reviewers.

C. The form in which data is to be analyzed, i.e. by District, by disabilities, etc

D. The frequency of the review, i.e. monthly or quarterly.

E. Length of time for the compilation of data, i.e. 6 or 12 months.

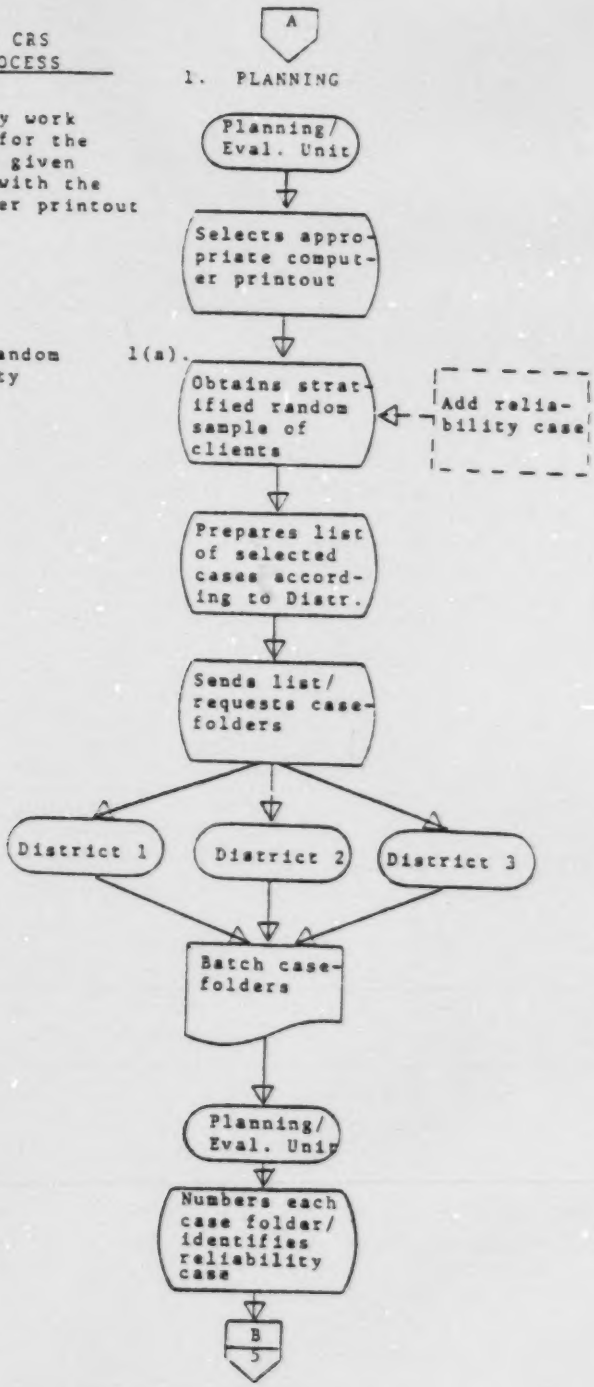
F. Target date.

These variables changes as the Agency's needs and requirements change. For example, in a given year, the Agency may decide to review only open cases, another year only closed cases, or alternate between one year doing the case review and another year doing only a partial review in order to fulfill the requirements for the new Secretary's General Standards.

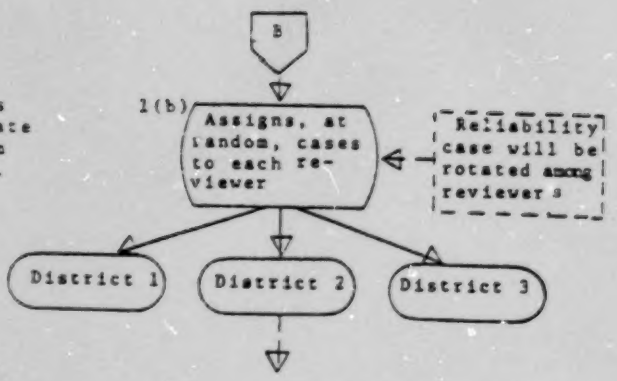
OUTLINE OF THE CRS APPLICATION PROCESS

1. **PLANNING** - Preparatory work done by the P&E Unit for the review of cases for a given period and it begins with the selection of a computer printout and random sampling.

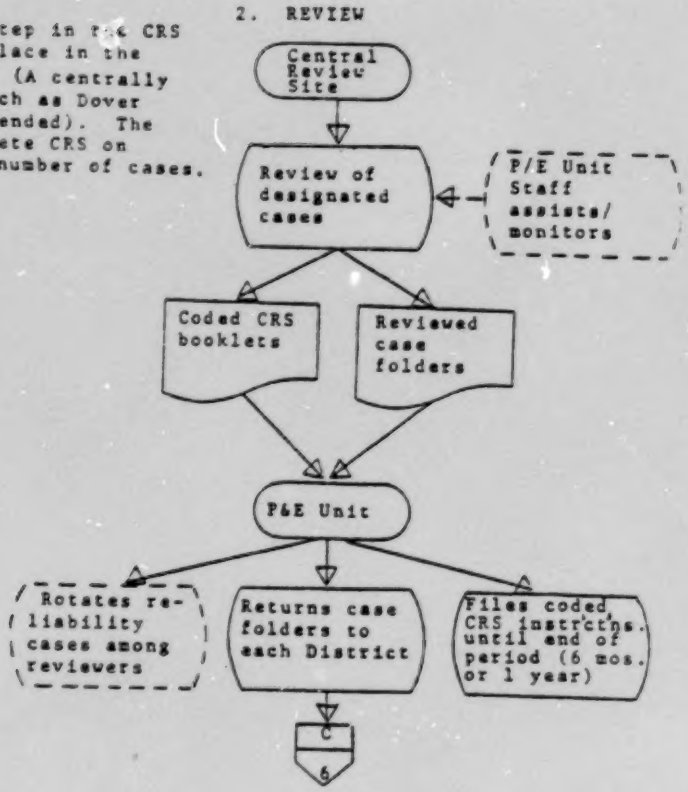
1(a) In addition to the random sampling, reliability case(s) are selected.



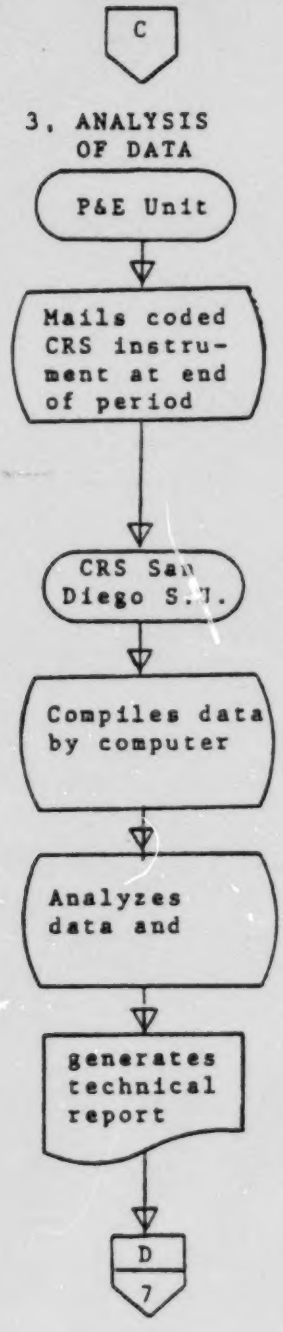
1(b). Random assignment is designed to facilitate review of cases from different Districts.



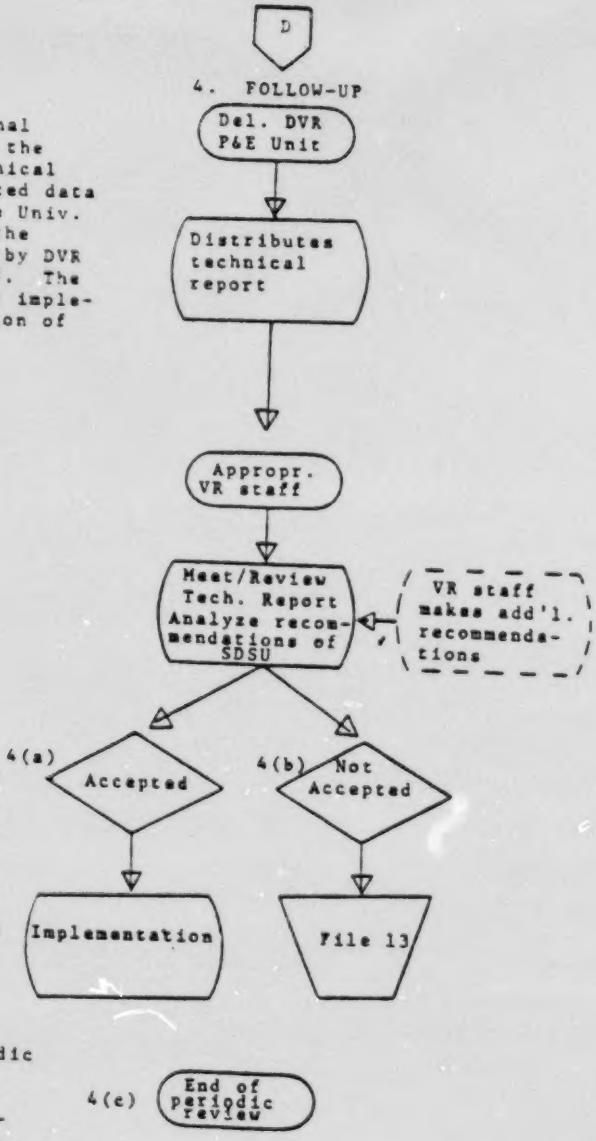
2. REVIEW - This step in the CRS process takes place in the field offices. (A centrally located site such as Dover has been recommended). The reviewers complete CRS on the designated number of cases.


2. REVIEW
Central Review Site
Review of designated cases
P/E Unit Staff assists/ monitors
Coded CRS booklets
Reviewed case folders
P&E Unit
Rotates reliability cases among reviewers
Returns case folders to each District
Files coded CRS instr'ctns. until end of period (6 mos. or 1 year)
C
6

3. ANALYSIS OF DATA - This phase essentially takes place at San Diego State University under the coordination of the P&E Unit which is also responsible for the dissemination of the results which leads to the Follow-Up phase.



4. FOLLOW-UP - This final step commences with the receipt of the technical report on the analyzed data from San Diego State Univ. and continues with the review of this data by DVR administrative staff. The end result is either implementation or rejection of each data item.



4(a) Pertains to accepted recommendations by VR reviewing staff and San Diego State Univ. CRS team.

4(b) Pertains to San Diego State Univ. recommendations not accepted by VR reviewing staff.

4(c) At the end of the periodic review, the CRS process will be evaluated with resulting changes incorporated into the system.

As indicated earlier, the Case Review Schedule has yielded a number of positive recommendations. These have resulted in important changes, and have initiated a number of actions which will result in long-range improvements. The CRS Committee has reviewed all of the recommendations and those selected for further action are summarized in Table 1.

As for FY-1980, a six-month period review was begun in April and will continue through September 1980. We are hoping that when CRS results become available at the end of the year, improvements will be realized in those areas where weaknesses were indicated. Accordingly, a determination will be made as to whether additional training measures are needed.

TABLE 1

DELAWARE'S IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES OF SELECTED CRS RECOMMENDATIONS

CRS SECTION	ACCEPTED RECOMMENDATIONS	VR Group Responsible For Implementation
II.A Preliminary Diagnostic Study	ADMINISTRATIVE:	
	(1) Add confidentiality and release of information statements to DVR-3 application form (from IWRP Form 6): "All information pertaining to my case and documentation and other pertinent material will be kept confidential and will be released only when necessary in developing my rehabilitation program or upon written consent by me."	Forms Committee
	(2) Revise DVR-3 (Application for Services) to include an explanation of the Client Assistance Project (Item 4c).	Forms Committee
III (Eligibility)	(1) Reinforce the inclusion of the case record of "Basic Information" gathered during the Preliminary Diagnostic Study as defined in the Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Policy Manual (Items 5 and 6).	CRS Skill Training
	(2) Require that the case note entry which reflects the eligibility determination include the counselor's analysis of factors creating the substantial handicap to employment (Items 5 and 6).	CRS Skill Training
	(3) The Casework Manual and Forms Committee should develop documentation criteria and methodology that will adequately satisfy state and federal requirements (Items 5 and 6).	Casework Manual Committee

(CONT.)

TABLE 1 (cont.)

CRS Section	Accepted Recommendations	VR Group Responsib For Implementation
	ADMINISTRATIVE:	
	(4) Provide an expanded definition of "related factors" for the Delaware State agency, using those listed in the Rehabilitation Services Manual 1505.03b as a reference: These factors may include, but are not limited to the following: a. lack of marketable skills; b. low educational level; c. community and employer prejudices and attitudes concerning disability; d. long-term unemployment; e. unstable work record; and, f. poor attitudes toward work, family, and community. (Ref. p. 27, Case Review Manual)	Casework Manual Committee
IV Feasibility-Eval. of Rehab. Potential	(1) Expand data gathering techniques to establish criteria for the evaluation of factors which bear on the client's handicap to employment (Item 5). (Factors such as Medical, Psychological, Vocational, Educational & other related) (Ref. p. 25 Case Review Manual)	CWM Comm.-Staff De Officer-Casework Supervisors
	(2) Establish guidelines procedures, and minimum criteria for counselor analysis of the nine variables covered by Items 8-16. Emphasis should be placed on how to write and document briefly and clearly. (Ref. p. 31 CRS Manual) The 9 variables to be described/appraised: Personal adjustment Vocational adjustment Social adjustment Intelligence level Prior educational achievements Work experience	CWM Comm. in consu tion CW Supervisor District Administr

TABLE 1 (cont.)

CRS Section	Accepted Recommendations	VR Group Responsible For Implementation
	ADMINISTRATIVE:	
	Ability to acquire occupational skills Capacity for successful job performance Client's employment opportunities	
V IWRP Status 12 and Above	(1) Expand or enforce current chapter on Similar Benefits in Delaware DVR Policy Manual. (Review Information available in the publication on Similar Benefits issued by the Research and Training Center at Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute) (Item 3b).	Casework Manual Committee
	(2) Revise IWRP Form 5 to include "None" next to "Similar Benefits".	Forms Committee
	(3) Attach dollar value to Similar Benefits which are indicated on IWRP5.	Medical Fees Committee/ Similar Benefits Coord.
	(4) Increase supervisory scrutiny of IWRP's in Regions 2 & 3 to assure inclusion of progress toward employment goal (Item 18).	
	(5) Revise IWRP Form 4 to include the indication of periodic and annual review.	Forms Committee
	(6) Refine IWRP Form 4 to assure that the specific objective criteria by which the progress of the client is evaluated is documented (Item 19).	Forms Committee
	(7) Determine annual review date (from date client entered Status 12) utilizing program computer print-out (Item 22).	EDP Screening Committee

(CONT.)

TABLE 1 (cont.)

CRS Section	Accepted Recommendations	VR Group Responsible For Implementation
	ADMINISTRATIVE:	
V	(8) Incease supervisory scrutiny of IWRP Form 6, enforcing the requirement of the recording of the client's views of the program. If client does not state his/her views, record "None" (Item 23).	Casework Manual Comm. (Revise Item 10.241 of Casework Manual, p.62)
	(9) Review the state policy and amend, if necessary, to assure that the Certificate of Ineligibility (IWRP Form 1) is issued in all cases closed in Status 30 or 28, and that proper documentation is recorded on the certificate according to RSM 1549.03c and CFR 1361.37c (Item 24c & Item 28)	Casework Manual Comm. (Policy Issue)
	(10) Revise IWRP Form 1 to include client's views of the ineligibility decision to meet the requirements for CFR 1361.39e1.	Contingent upon decision re Agency's policy on issue of certificate of ineligibility
VI Delivery of Services	(1) Reinforce need for documentation and evaluation of similar benefits pertaining to all services (Items 5g and 7g).	CRS Skill Training/ Casework Supervisors
	(2) Require more extensive provision of Placement Services	
VII Termination of Cases	(1) Increase supervisory scrutiny of cases to be closed due to loss of client contact to assure substantial recontact efforts (Item 31b) (Region 1).	Casework Supervisors

(CONT.)

TABLE 1 (cont.)

CRS Section	Accepted Recommendation	VR Group Responsible For Implementation
	ADMINISTRATORS:	
VII	(2) Increase supervisory scrutiny of closure activities (Statuses 30 & 28) relative to the eligibility decision to assure that when possible: a) full consultation with the client (or client's representative) was made (Item 35, also refer to CRS instruction Manual, page 52), and b) the client was informed in writing of the closure action taken (Item 36).	Casework Supervisors
	(3) Increase supervisory scrutiny to assure the presence of necessary documentation in closure letters to clients and/or closure statement as IWRP amendments to be given to clients. (Item 48).	Casework Supervisors
	(4) Increase supervisory review in Region 3 to assure appropriate reporting of closure outcome to other agencies (Item 41) and adjustment closure form to reflect that the appropriate agencies were contacted regarding closure action (refer to Casework Manaul Committee).	Casework Manual Comm., Forms Comm., Casework Supervisors
	(5) Revise IWRP-7, when stock is exhausted, to include job title as well as the D.O.T. code for the type of occupation (Item 42b).	Forms Committee

(CONT.)

TABLE 1 (cont.)

CRS Section	Accepted Recommendations	VR Group Responsible For Implementation
	TRAINING:	
III Eligibility	(1) Contingent upon the results of reviews subsequent to the initiation of Administrative Recommendations 1, 2, and 3, develop training techniques to assist counselors in documentation of data synthesis relative to eligibility determination (Items 5 and 6).	CRS Skill Training
	(2) Train counselors in recording the results of interviews bases on information to be gathered as defined in the Delaware Policy Manual (Items 5 and 6).	CRS Skill Training
IV Feasibility Eval. of Rehab Potential	(1) Provide training and develop skills in diagnostic interviewing, analyzing, and documentation with specific reinforcement of the definitions of "describe" and "appraise" as outlined on page 30 in the CRS Manual of Instructions (Items 8-16).	Staff Dev. Officer
	(2) Contingent upon the results of future reviews subsequent to the implementation of Administrative Recommendations 1 and 2, consider skill training in the synthesis of information in relation to the client and the vocational goal with emphasis on clarity and succinctness.	Staff Dev. Officer

(CONT.)

TABLE 1 (cont.)

CRS Section	Accepted Recommendations	VR Group Responsible For Implementation
	TRAINING:	
V IWRP-Status 12 and above	(1) Provide training in the proper recording of the results of similar benefit investigation of the IWRP (Item 3c).	Staff Dev. Officer
	(2) Train counselors on the proper procedure for completing revised IWRP Form 4.	Staff Dev. Officer
	(3) Train counselors in procedures for evaluation of service delivery in terms of outcome (Items 18-21).	
	(4) Provide training in documenting objective criteria, procedures, schedules, and results of periodic progress evaluation on the refined IWRP (Items 18-21).	Staff Dev. Officer
	(5) Provide training in documenting satisfactory vocational adjustment on Status 26 closure amendment (Item 25d).	Staff Dev. Officer
VI Delivery of Services	(1) Provide training in documentation and evaluation of similar benefits as they apply to all (Items 5g and 7g) services.	Staff Dev. Officer/ Similar Benefit Coo (Trng. at Oct. meet District Staff)
	(2) Provide training in the provision and documentation of Placement Services. Use the definition of placement activities as provided in the Rehabilitation SErvices Manual 1541.01 (-1), 1541.03(2), 1541.04, and 1541.07.	Staff Dev. Officer

(CONT

ABLE 1 (cont.)

RS ection	Accepted Recommendations	VR Group Responsib For Implementation
	TRAINING:	
VII rmination Cases	(1) Provide training in developing supervisory consistency in writing adequate closure statements as IWRP amendments and closure notification to the client (Item 48).	Staff Dev. Officer Casework Supervis
	(2) Provide training on counselor documentation pertaining to placement services with "as appropriate" in mind (Item 54a through i).	Staff Dev. Officer
	(3) Provide training in the documentation of criteria related to suitable employment, specific to items 55b and c. (Refer to Administrative Recommendation number 9).	Staff Dev. Officer

TABLE 1 (conclusion) EXAMPLES OF REJECTED CRS RECOMMENDATIONS

CRS Section	Rejected Recommendations
	REJECTED:
II.A Preliminary Diagnostic Study	To review State Policy regarding use of State Agency Psychiatric/Psychological Medical consultants: · No problems are seen with current status of DVR's Medica consultants · This CRS item as stated is not required for compliance w Federal Regulations
II.B Extended Evaluation	Rejected sample review of cases in extended evaluation: Out of 120 cases completely reviewed, only 9% received extende evaluation. San Diego recommended that a sample of 30 - 50 ca in extended evaluation be reviewed to determine areas of stren and needs improvement. The number of extended evaluation case closed in statuses 26 and 28 is relatively small to be of significance; the group felt San Diego's recommendation is a l priority item and we should direct our concerns toward other areas.
V IWRP Status 12 and above	Reject data pertaining to the provision of the annual review o cases closed non-rehabilitated. Provision is made on IWRP Form 6. Reviewers, at the time of the review, did not take in account the provision of the IWRP-6. Therefore, analyzed data indicated that Delaware lacked such provision. Another recommendation on Section VII was also rejected on sim account. The validity of the reviewers responses was question

ISSUES IDENTIFICATION AND TRACKING SYSTEM

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One of the activities of the Model Evaluation Unit was to develop a Conceptual Framework to describe the process by which policy issues are identified and analyzed and how policy decisions are made, implemented, and evaluated. Some policy decisions are made in seconds by a single individual in the organization with little or no interaction with others. At the other end of the continuum are policy issues which require a very large expenditure of staff time and resources over extended periods. Involvement of a wide variety of staff of the agency, and perhaps from outside the agency, are sometimes required to gather, study and analyze data before a decision is reached. Even after the policy decision has been made, the amount of staff time and resources required for its implementation can vary enormously. A complex program such as the Vocational Rehabilitation Division will have at any given time a substantial number of such policy issues in various stages of analysis, decision making, or implementation.

The identification of a policy issue on which staff time and resources are to be committed is an administrative decision which should be made deliberately. Such decisions are often made in an environment of constantly shifting priorities and staff availability and capability.

Given the number of issues, the shifting priorities, the staffing changes, and a general crisis orientation common to many human service programs today, it is not uncommon for important policy issues to become lost, leaving the Administrator disadvantaged by not having vital data when it is required.

Without belaboring the point, we believe that most administrators would agree that a system is required to identify issues with policy implications, to consciously assign staff to analyze such issues and to propose alternatives and to complete the action through the implementation of the Administrator's decision. Such a system should provide the Administrator with periodic reports so that changes may be made when necessary to insure that deadlines are met and that limited resources are focused on the most important activities. Such a system assures accountability.

The OVRD Issues Identification and Tracking System is an attempt to provide such a rational system of accountability as an adjunct to the Conceptual Framework.

The system begins with the recognition by the Administrator or the Deputy Administrator that a decision should not be made on a specific issue without study and that the issue is important enough to allocate staff time and resources to develop it into a decision package. This recognition may be reached by the Administrator working singly, it may evolve from discussion with others, or it may become apparent from memorandums or routine management data.

When the decision is made to expend staff time and resources on a particular issue, the following are required:

1) Identification of the issue;
2) Assignment and notification of a responsible lead person;
3) Assignment of an anticipated completion date or the date when a decision package is due; and
4) Notification of the person who maintains the Issues and Identification and Tracking System.

Usually, the above requirements are completed during discussions at an administrative meeting, although they could also be completed by an assignment memorandum. Commonly, an issue will surface during the regularly-scheduled meetings between the Administrator and other staff members. Discussion then follows on such matters as when the decision is needed, availability of data, priority of these issues relative to others, relationship of this issue to the agency's mission and to the missions of sister agencies, and which staff member is best able to develop the decision package. A verbal assignment is then made, which, in most instances, is followed by a written assignment from the supervisor to the responsible person. A copy of the written assignment is sent to the individual who maintains the Issues Identification and Tracking System and the issue is added to the list of those on which the Administrator will receive monthly progress reports.

The system began in November 1979 with 32 issues. As of May 31, 1980, a total of 12 issues had been completed and nine new issues added. One issue was dropped prior to completion because it was not attainable, and two issues were renumbered to group them with related efforts. Thus, in our experience, there has been an average of slightly more than 30 issues in the tracking system at any one time. Caution is exercised to track only those deemed of considerable importance to the agency, including those one-time actions required by higher authority but not including regular repetitive reports. Such repetitive reports have their own tickler system to insure that timelines are met.

During the six months, 23 different staff persons have been assigned responsibility for one or more issues, with no person assigned more than three at any one time. Anticipated completion time has varied from two to 18 months.

Although a complex numbering system is currently in use, we recommend a simple sequential numbering of issues be adopted for identification purposes.

A word processing system is used to store the complete tracking system. During the last few days of each month a reminder memorandum is generated, using the word processor, for each issue being tracked. These memoranda are then distributed to the persons responsible, who complete a handwritten progress report on each issue by the fifth working day of the following month. Only a few minutes are required for each person responsible to handwrite a concise progress report and route it to the one who compiles the monthly report for the Administrator. Likewise, the compiler expends only a brief time to check each report, underscore any delays or roadblocks identified, assign an appropriate progress symbol and route it to the word processing operator for text editing. The monthly progress reports on each issue vary in length from a single sentence to as much as a half-page of single-spaced typing. Care is exercised to limit the length of the progress report and include only that information required by the Administrator for review purposes.

In addition to the narrative paragraph on each issue, a quick reference index and a transmittal memo are included to the Administrator to increase the utility of the complete report. The transmittal memo is used to call attention to new issues, completed issues, and those which are not progressing as expected. The index also contains a progress symbol for each issue. The symbols are: "S = satisfactory; "PS" = partially satisfactory or minor revisions are required; and "U" = unsatisfactory. The narrative paragraph for each issue which is identified as unsatisfactory or partially satisfactory contains underscored sections which describe the problem. This method of identification permits the Administrator and/or other appropriate supervisors to be readily aware of any problems and take whatever action is necessary to get the issue moving again.

Monthly progress on the issues is rated satisfactory for the majority of issues, and there are usually three to six issues which are considered only partially satisfactory and one or two that are definitely unsatisfactory. Corrective action is taken, when appropriate, as a result of the tracking process.

We believe this system provides a reasonable degree of accountability with a minimum of staff time expended. It also provides an information flow to all appropriate staff on a variety of vital issues. Finally, the Administrator's Office is fully informed and can take action to shift priorities, resources, and staff in whatever way necessary to accomplish that which is most important.

Copies of the June 1980 Issues Report, together with the "assignment memorandum" and the "monthly reporting memorandum," are attached.

Although our system utilizes a word processor in its implementation, it is not essential to have such sophisticated equipment. The system could be initiated on a manual basis with only slightly more secretarial and typing time required.

OREGON VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION DIVISION

"ISSUES ASSIGNMENT MEMORANDUM"

TO:

FROM:

SUBJECT: VRD Issues Tracking

You have been assigned responsibility for a VRD issue on which the Administrator has determined that staff time and resources will be expended. In order that the Administrator and others may be kept informed on the progress of this issue, a report is required from you by the fifth working day of each month. The report should concisely describe those activities related to the issue which were completed during the previous month. When appropriate, you should also recommend changes in anticipated completion date or any other matters of which the Administrator should be aware concerning this issue.

A consolidated report of progress on all issues being tracked will be prepared monthly and a copy will be supplied to each responsible person. Please retain this assignment for reference.

A reminder statement for each issue for which you are responsible will be sent to you near the end of each month and it should be used in preparing your monthly report. It need not be typed, but please write legibly.

The issue which has been assigned to you is:

Number	Title	Anticipated completion date

Narrative description of assignment:

(When appropriate, this description takes the form of a measurable objective.)

OREGON VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION DIVISION

"MONTHLY REPORTING MEMORANDUM"

TO: 1. DATE:
2.

FROM:

SUBJECT: VRD Issues Accountability Report

You have been assigned responsibility for the following issue:

Number	Title	Anticipated completion date

Last month's progress on this issue was rated _____.

In the space below please report your progress on this issue during the current month. Return this report to me no later than the fifth working day of next month. Please identify any problems which have caused or may cause a delay in completing work on this issue and any recommendations for change.

Progress report:

STATE OF OREGON

INTEROFFICE MEMO

TO Administrator's Office
Dale Reeves, Harv Schubothe

DATE July 1, 1980

FROM Program Evaluation & Statistics
Neil Sherwood

SUBJECT Progress Report for May 1980 on VRD Issues and Action Plan

In accordance with your memorandum of 11-30-79, the progress report for April is herewith submitted.

This report covers a total of 30 issues, one of which has just been added. The new issues is entitled, "Study of the Younger Nursing Home Population to Determine Feasibility for Moving Some to Less Costly Care. Report Results." It is assigned to Mr. Stephens.

Two issues have been completed with this report. They are Issue Number 6 - Develop an Equitable Sheltered Workshop Fee System, and Issue Number 17 - Completion of VRD 1977-78 Biennial Report. These issues will not be carried on future reports.

Seven issues are considered to be progressing only partially satisfactorily because of the reasons underlined in the narrative portion of the report. Two issues are considered to be progressing in an unsatisfactory manner. They are Issue Number 9-5 - To Develop Operational Plan with Local Schools, and Issue Number 9-6 - To Develop a Grants Management Handbook. The problem with both appears to be that work considered to be higher in priority is crowding out any time for action on these issues.

Twenty issues are progressing satisfactorily and one carries no progress rating as it has just been assigned.

ld

Attachments

cc: Bob Butler
Sue Druffel
Elsie Forrest
Irene Graham
Tom Huffsmith
Laurilee Hatcher
T.C. James
John Jelden
Gerry Mann
Sandy Matthews
Ross Moran
Clarence Persad
Jerry Rempel
Ken Russell
John Schreiber
Clyde Stephens
Doyle Taylor
R.E. Wright

Contains Recycled Materials
81-125-1367

INDEX

NUMBER	ISSUE OR OBJECTIVE TITLE	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	PROGRESS*
1	Services to Injured Workers	June 1980 (revised)	John Jelden	PS
2	Independent Living	December 1980	Clyde Stephens	S
3	Implementation of SB 5555	June 1981	Jerry Rempel	S
5-1	Strengthen VRD's Information System & Evaluation Capacity	September 1980	Neil Sherwood	S
5-1-a	Revise and Document a Conceptual Framework for Information Flow and Policy Development within VRD. Publish Document.	June 1980 (revised)	Neil Sherwood	PS
5-1-b	Plan and Conduct Field Tests of the Proposed Standards for VR Program and Project Evaluations. Report Findings.	August 1980	Ross Moran	S
5-1-c	Update VRD's Capacity to Engage in Program Evaluation Activities by Providing Training to Project Staff and Others. Report Results.	July 1980	Laurilee Hatcher	S
5-1-d	Develop a System for Tracking Major Issues under Study within VRD. Report Results.	December 1980	Clarence Persad (revised)	S
5-1-e	Develop an Improved Forms and Records Management System. Document Results.	June 1980 (revised)	Robin Wright	PS
5-1-f	Field Test the Facilities Information System.	June 1981	Laurilee Hatcher (revised)	S
5-2	Evaluate the Costs and Benefits of VR Services	June 1980	Ross Moran	S
5-3	Study Ways to Reduce the Duration of VR Services to Clients	June 1980	Irene Graham	S
5-4	Evaluate Population Estimates & Resource Allocation Models	September 1980	Ross Moran	S
5-5	Evaluate Effectiveness of Job Placement Services	July 1980	Doyle Taylor	S

NUMBER	ISSUE OR OBJECTIVE TITLE	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	PROGRESS*
6	Develop an Equitable Sheltered Workshop Fee System	May 1980 (completed 5/80)	John Schreiber	S
7	Develop Workshop Certification Standard Monitoring System	June 1981	John Schreiber	S
8	Monitor and Evaluate Sheltered Services Subsidy Program	January 1981	John Schreiber	U
9-1	Evaluate Mental Health/ Deaf Project	January 1981	Elsie Forrest	S
9-5	Develop Operational Plan with Local Schools	March 1980	Irene Graham	U
9-6	Develop Grants Management Handbook	March 1980	Tom Huffsmith	U
12	Review and Revise Client Caseload Procedures	June 1980	Terry James	S
12-5	Recast the Administrative Manual	July 1980	Terry James	PS
14-1	Develop Personnel and Training Information System Plans	(to be determined)	Sandy Matthews	S
14-2	Develop Quality Accounting and Purchasing Services	July 1980	Ken Russell	S
14-3a	Train Staff of Users Guide for MIS	August 1980	Sandy Matthews	S
14-3c	Develop Indexed Repository of Professional/Technical Information (Phases I & II)	July 1980	Neil Sherwood	S
14-4a	Develop Supervisory Training on Dealing with Problem Employes	July 1980	Sue Druffel	PS

NUMBER	ISSUE OR OBJECTIVE TITLE	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	PROGRESS*
14-5a	Implement a Revised Automated Fiscal System	June 1981	Bob Butler	S
17	Completion of OVRD 1977-78 Biennial Report	May 1980 (completed 6/80)	Robin Wright	PS
18 (new)	Study the Younger Nursing Home Population to Determine Feasibility for Moving Some to Less Costly Care. Report Results.	Sept. 1980	Clyde Stephens	

* S - Satisfactory
PS - Partially Satisfactory - see underlined section of report
U - Unsatisfactory

Issue Number 1 - Services to Injured Workers -

Mr. Jelden reports that substantial effort was expended during May to develop a draft of the contract between WCD and VRD. It was not possible to complete it and the anticipated completion date should slip to June 1980.

Issue Number 2 - Independent Living -

Mr. Stephens reports that there has been no movement on this issue during May. VRD must await the approval of its grant application for federal funds to initiate a Part B grant program in Oregon. Approval in RSA has been held up by the activation of the new Education Department and the lack of delegation of authority to the RSA Commissioner. The anticipated completion date of Dec. 1980 remains.

Issue Number 5-1 - Strengthen VRD's Information System and Evaluation Capacity -

Mr. Sherwood reports that progress is adequate except for some delay in documenting the impact of the recent administrative reorganization on the conceptual model for information flow and policy development (See Issue Number 5-1-a) and further delay in documenting an improved forms and records management system (See Issue Number 5-1-e).

Issue Number 5-1-a - Revise and Document a Conceptual Framework for Information Flow and Policy Development within VRD. Publish Document.

Mr. Sherwood reports a continuation of the process of realigning personnel and functions within the recently established organizational structure. The effect of this and other workload has resulted in delay of the revised conceptual framework document required by the federal contract. The completion of this document is now targeted for the end of June.

Issue Number 5-1-b - Plan and Conduct Field Tests of the Proposed Standards for VR Program and Project Evaluations. Report Findings.

Dr. Moran reports that data for the closure and 12-month follow-up surveys has been collected and entered on a computer tape. Copies of this tape will be forwarded to the standards and coordinating contractors. The data will be locally analyzed during June and a report will be distributed to agency staff. A six-month follow-up survey will be mailed to each of the 300 rehabilitants who were sent a closure survey. This component of the overall study will commence in July and run through October.

Issue Number 5-1-c - Update VRD's Capacity to Engage in Program Evaluation Activities by Providing Training to Project Staff and Others. Report Results.

Ms. Hatcher reports that Mr. Wright continued his forms management class. No other training was received during May. Ms. Hatcher began work on the development of a workbook with specific VR examples for teaching Easytrieve programming within the agency.

Issue Number 5-1-d - Develop a System for Tracking Major Issues under Study within VRD. Report Results.

Mr. Mann reports that the issues tracking system is in place and functioning adequately. Consideration is being given to issuing a reminder as of the last day of each month to each person responsible for an issue. Hopefully this procedure would result in a more timely submission of the monthly reports.

Any suggestions for improvement of the Issues Tracking System will be appreciated.

Beginning with the July report Mr. Clarence Persad will assume responsiblity for the preparation of the monthly issues report.

Issue Number 5-1-e - Develop an Improved Forms and Records Management System. Document Results.

Mr. Wright reports that a draft of the system documentation is being prepared for staff review. Completion is now anticipated at the end of June.

Issue Number 5-1-f - Plan and Conduct Field Testing of the Proposed National Facilities Information System. Document Plans.

Mr. Mann reports that the two training sessions for Oregon rehabilitation facilities staff were held during May. One was held in Portland and one in Eugene. Most Oregon facilities were represented. Mr. Schreiber, Ms. Hatcher, Mr. Russell, and Mr. Lawler of VRD also attended. The actual field test is scheduled to begin on July 1. Ms. Hatcher will assume responsibility for this issue in the future.

Issue Number 5-2 - Evaluate the Costs and Benefits of VR Services.

Dr. Moran reports that he has completed a draft cost/benefit model. The report is circulating among agency staff for critical review. Additionally, a copy is being reviewed by Dr. Richard Dodson of Berkeley Planning Associates. Dr. Dodson is an authority on benefit/cost analysis of VR and is expected to provide valuable criticism. Unless substantial revision is recommended, the report will be completed on schedule. Once consensus is outlined on the default assumptions of the model, it will be possible to increase the automated components of the procedure. This revised procedure should be tested with the FY 80 data available in October.

Issue Number 5-3 - Study Ways to Reduce the Duration of VR Services to Clients -

Ms. Graham reports that a questionnaire is being prepared to distribute to the members of the NRCA advisory group which meets regularly with Mr. Reeves. Suggestions will be sought as to ways the field could visualize carrying out this assignment.

Issue Number 5-4 - Evaluate Population Estimates and Resource Allocation Models -

Dr. Moran reports that estimates of number served and case service costs were made through FY 83 for agency priority groups. He will be working more closely with other members of the Program Planning and Evaluation Unit to develop predictive resource allocation models.

Issue Number 5-5 - Evaluate the Effectiveness of Job Placement Services -

Mr. Taylor reports that follow-up on the issue of increasing efficiency of the job developers, which was raised as a consequence of earlier program evaluation studies, is now essentially complete. In addition to a basic workplan for all job developers, the following changes have been recommended in the program model, and endorsed by the Administrator:

1) Wherever practical, job developers will be assigned to a single office, under the supervision of the office supervisor. It is presupposed that the greatest "team" efficiency is realized when all members of the team are accountable to the same team leader.
2) To maximize job developer skills and services, only those clients with the more severe handicaps requiring more time or extra effort in the placement process will be referred to the job developer.
3) Placement efforts shall be carried out in accordance with an individualized written placement plan mutually arrived at by the counselor, client, and job developer. Progress on plan implementation shall be monitored and recorded in the client file.

Issue Number 5-5 (continued)

4) There will be an increased "rehab" expectation from team efforts which include job developers.
5) The basic workplan will allow for individual differences in assignments of job developers to accommodate the unique circumstances of the assignment.
6) As vacancies occur in the Employment Specialist series, these positions will be converted to VR Counselor I positions. Counselors hired into these positions will function as placement counselors for the first year of their job assignments.

Comments, suggestions and input on the common elements of the job developer workplan have been received from managers, supervisors, and job developers and will be incorporated in a revised draft model.

Issue Number 6 - Develop an Equitable Sheltered Workshop Fee System -

Mr. Schreiber reports that the workshop fee model has been completed and accepted by the workshops in the Association (OARF). This issue has now been completed and it will not be necessary to report further on it.

Issue Number 7 - Develop Workshop Certification Standard Monitoring System -

Mr. Schreiber reports that The Workshop Association has agreed that VRD adopt CARF accreditation with the costs to be shared equally for the initial survey by the facility and the Division.

The Administrative Rule to mandate CARF and to adopt the revised standards has been submitted to the Secretary of State for adoption on July 1, 1980.

Issue Number 8 - Monitor and Evaluate Sheltered Workshop Subsidy Program -

Mr. Schreiber reports that part of the baseline data - client wages - was received and the average computed for each facility. Information regarding client terminations, client disabilities, and referral sources has not yet been received from AFS.

Issue Number 9-1 - Evaluate the Mental Health/Deaf Project -

Ms. Forrest reports that the Interim Evaluation Report on this project was completed and distributed to all interested parties in Oregon during April 1980. Copies were also distributed to the State Coordinators for the Deaf in other states as well as to the central and regional offices of RSA. Several commendatory letters have been received from recipients.

A final evaluation report will be prepared in January 1981.

Issue Number 9-5 - Develop Operational Plan with Local Schools -

Ms. Graham reports that copies of the local plan have been distributed to the field. Requests have been made through Regional Managers for signed documents. Some regions simply don't want to do it.

It is suggested that we reinitiate this process in the field with a 30-day deadline for compliance.

Issue Number 9-6 - Develop Grants Management Handbook -

Mr. Huffsmith reports that the ever-enduring Grants Management Handbook has been typed in rough draft form!

However, as a result of recommendations made by our federal friends, Clyde Stephens has roughed out a section on ILR to be included in the Handbook. Also, the federal friends suggested we beef up the sections dealing with evaluation, etc. Finally, the Handbook needs to be revised to reflect changes made as a result of the most recent administrative reorganization.

Issue Number 9-6 (continued)

Mr. Huffsmith also indicates that after getting the Planning and Evaluation Unit organized as far as job duties are concerned, this project will be delegated to some lucky person for completion. Until then, in consideration of the press of other business, it will go on the shelf as a very low priority item.

Issue Number 12 - Review and Revise Client Caseload Procedures -

Mr. James reports that the final case development forms have been delayed because of other priorities. If other new priorities are not established, the draft forms will be printed in June.

Appendix A is scheduled to be distributed to all Manual holders in June.

The denturist policy is complete except for final review by Dr. Burwell and the Administrator.

Issue Number 12-5 - Recast the Administrative Manual -

Mr. James reports that most of the volumes schedules of the Manual revision project are on schedule except Staff Development and Training where performance to date has been unsatisfactory.

Issue Number 14-1 - Personnel and Training Tracking Information System -

Ms. Matthews reports that delays in printing have slowed progress on the TR-100E field test. Forms and instructions have been received and will be utilized beginning in June.

Training Unit staff reviewed Executive Department's remote Access System which will be used after July 1, 1980. This system will be used as the personnel data base for both Training Unit and Personnel Unit.

Sample reports still need to be developed before preliminary systems design and establishment of a meaningful completion date.

Issue Number 14-2 - Develop Quality Accounting and Purchasing Services -

Mr. Russell reports that:

1. Employe Travel and Purchasing of Client Services and Supplies OVRD Manual sections were issued this month.
2. Inventory of Administrative Office fixed assets was completed.
3. Continued work on new OVRD Manual.
4. Participated in I&E Workshop Review of procedures (accounting) by Region X.
5. Attended the accounting portion of a Facilities Workshop in Portland.
6. Survived a General Services review of VRD purchasing policies.
7. Revised mail room schedule.
8. Met with Bob Butler and Mike McBride on the "MARS" system.
9. Mike McBride started work on "MARS."

Issue Number 14-3-a - Train Staff on Users Guide for MIS -

Ms. Matthews reports that the needs survey is completed and the data has been analyzed. While changes in the system could be proposed fiscal considerations may rule modifications requiring reprogramming or report modifications. Due to this, a training package will be developed around management reports currently in existence.

Issue Number 14-3-c - Develop an Indexed Repository of Professional/Technical Information (Phases I and II) -

Mr. Sherwood reports that the target date of July 1 remains attainable for completion of the initial phases of the development plan.

Issue Number 14-4-a - Develop Supervisory Training on Dealing with Problem Employes -

Ms. Druffel reports that due to the decrease of one staff member in the Personnel Unit and increased workload involving day-to-day personnel issues and problems, there has not been any recent work accomplished in developing a training program for our supervisors. She does not anticipate any time being available for this project in the near future under the present staffing allocation.

It is her recommendation to assign this project to the Training Unit using Ms. Druffel as an advisor or consultant.

Issue Number 14-5-a - Implement a Revised Automated Fiscal System -

Mr. McBride reports that the general design of the revised system is in progress. It is too early in the design phase to identify specific tasks which could be scheduled.

A detailed schedule will produced soon after July 1, 1980, as the fiscal input is applied in more detail.

Issue Number 17 - Completion of OVRD's 1977-78 Biennial Report -

Mr. Wright reports that the report was distributed to selected staff in early June. An evaluation questionnaire accompanied the reports and except for analysis of questionnaire results this issue is completed.

Issue Number 18 - Study the Younger Nursing Home Population to Determine Feasibility of Moving to Less Costly Care. Report Results. -

This issue was assigned to Mr. Stephens as of June 2 so action will be reported in the next report.

THE PROGRAM EVALUATOR AS EVALUATION CONSULTANT: TWO EPISODES

ROBERT H. RICHARDSON, Ph.D.
PROGRAM EVALUATION UNIT
MICHIGAN BUREAU OF REHABILITATION

The fundamental task of the program evaluator is to generate accurate and useful information about programs and to communicate that information in a usable form so that managers can make the decisions for which they are responsible. The key descriptors in this task definition are "useful" and "usable." The fundamental characteristic of a "good" evaluation is its utility to decision makers. However, any program evaluation can only be as useful to decision makers as the adequacy of the evaluation design incorporated in the project from its inception. If there is no design for evaluation or if the program lacks specific objectives or fails to articulate the criteria by which program outcomes are to be measured, the design will be inadequate and the resulting evaluation will fail to produce useful or usable information.

In an ideal situation, proposals for new programs or requests for the continuation of existing programs contain a detailed evaluation section specifying the intended outcomes of the program and identifying the specific criteria to be used for process and outcome evaluation. Again, in an ideal situation, the program evaluator would be responsible for routinely reviewing the evaluation section of program proposals and for certifying their evaluability in terms of the intentions and expectations of management. Those proposals and requests failing to obtain approval in this process would be designated for remediation in consultation with the program evaluator. Thus, ideally, a routine process of review and consultation would guarantee both the evaluability of agency programs and projects and the utility of the information generated by program evaluations.

In most situations, however, the work of the program evaluator takes place under conditions which fall somewhat short of the ideal. Many programs are considered to be valuable by definition and are never required to undergo formal evaluation. Other programs are put together so hurriedly because of proposal deadlines or other reasons that there is little expectation that either the stated objectives will be attained or that the evaluation design will be implemented as written. It is often only later, in the event of a financial shortfall or the recollection of an impending report, that the issue of program evaluability becomes immediately relevant. When this is the case, what is to be done? What can the manager or program evaluator do to satisfy the manager's need for useful and usable information for decision making? One solution, although less than ideal, is the utilization of the program evaluator as a consultant to design an evaluation midcourse which is fair and equitable on the one hand, and which satisfies the manager's need for accurate and useful information on the other.

The purpose of this article is to describe two episodes in a state vocational rehabilitation agency in which the program evaluator was given this assignment. Both consultations are still in process at this writing and it is not known how they will turn out. In addition to the intended outcomes of the consultation, all the participants are gaining new insights with respect to the importance of evaluation design and of having an adequate design "in place" from the beginning of the program. However, the program evaluation unit is also learning that it needs to be prepared to provide assistance when that condition does not exist.

Episode #1

For the past three years, one of the agency's local district offices has participated in an RSA-funded facilities staffing project with a local medical facility specializing in physical restoration services for the severely disabled. The notion underlying the project was that, given the size of the hospital and the number of patients who became clients of the surrounding vocational rehabilitation district offices, it would be mutually beneficial for both the hospital and the state agency to place a full-time vocational rehabilitation counselor in the hospital to coordinate the delivery of rehabilitation services to patients from within the jurisdiction of the adjacent local district office and to serve as liaison between the hospital and outlying district offices for the delivery of rehabilitation services. This pilot project proved to be so successful--"mutually satisfying" might be a more appropriate term since the original goals and objectives of the project lacked objective criteria of success and depended primarily upon the subjective assessment of the principal parties--that both the hospital and the agency desired to continue the relationship. This desire was consumated with the signing of a match agreement to take effect on October 1, 1979.

On December 27, 1979, almost three months after the initiation of the new agreement, the agency program consultant responsible for monitoring the agreement, met with this evaluator to lay the groundwork for a plan for evaluating the project. The program consultant presented an historical overview of the project and described the close working relationship which had evolved between the agency and the hospital. When asked about the goals and objectives of the project, he indicated that they were listed in the match agreement and that I would receive a copy for my review. In response to the evaluator's repeated emphasis upon the importance of highly specific objectives with measurable outcome criteria, he indicated that although the objectives listed in the match agreement were "somewhat general," they enjoyed a high degree of consensus which had developed over the three years of the pilot project. "The problem," he said (and this was the first mention of anything problematic in the relationship), "is not so much with the goals and objectives as with the responsibilities of the counselor to the hospital on the one hand, and to the vocational rehabilitation agency on the other."

Fortunately, this description of "the problem" prompted one of those "ah-ha" moments of recognition on the part of the evaluator which reoriented the rest of the discussion and ultimately clarified the nature of the evaluation task. It was, after all, "the problem," not some abstract interest in program evaluation, that provided the primary motivation for seeking out the program evaluator. Furthermore, the nature of "the problem," which had to do with the delivery system through which the project objectives were achieved and not with the objectives as such, indicated that what was called for was not the design of a product or outcome evaluation but a design for process evaluation--a system for monitoring and evaluating the processes by which the program products would be delivered.

These insights resulted in a series of meetings convened by the agency program consultant and involving the project's hospital-based co-supervisor, agency-based co-supervisor, and the program evaluator. This working group made a thorough review of the stated goals and objectives of the agreement and the criteria by which these goals and objectives would be evaluated. (The program evaluator was never satisfied that they were sufficiently specific for a fully adequate outcome evaluation. However, in view of the broad consensus in support of the project goals, and in the interest of dealing with the problem which prompted the request for the evaluation, the evaluator heeded the ancient adage: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it.") In addition, the group articulated a set of four basic process objectives which, together with their sub-objectives and activities, specify the procedures to be utilized by the counselor in implementing her assigned tasks. At this writing, the co-supervisors of the project are installing a data collection system that will enable them to monitor the status of each process objective and thus to make those programmatic adjustments and course corrections which will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the project. There is also some discussion of designing an impact evaluation through the installation of a follow-up of hospital-agency clients.

Episode #2

This episode is concerned with the evaluation of a Client Assistance Project (CAP) in a state vocational rehabilitation agency. The circumstances surrounding the initiation of the evaluation consultation were somewhat fortuitous. Technically, this federally-funded project had been in existence for two years and was applying for an extension grant that would become effective at the end of the third (current) fiscal year. Actually, the project had a very unstable beginning, characterized by a six-month delay in funding, philosophical differences between the staff and management with respect to implementation of the project and ultimately a change in leadership three months into the second fiscal year. The first tasks of the new director were to write a first-year annual report, plan the program for the second fiscal year and recruit a staff. Under these circumstances, it is not particularly surprising that the project director, who had had no previous experience with program evaluation, included a rather weak evaluation design in her project plan.

It was at this point that one of the senior managers of the agency approached the program evaluation unit with a request that someone be assigned to help the CAP director design an adequate evaluation. Management anticipated an extremely tight financial situation for the next fiscal year and would require concrete evaluative information to facilitate decisions which would have to be made about the project should it fail to receive a federally-funded extension grant. Furthermore, the manager indicated that he wanted "concrete information about the contributions of the project to the agency; what would be missed if we didn't have it (the project); how this kind of contact with clients results in something different for clients and 'system-changes' which improve services for clients."

At this same time, the program evaluation unit, itself part of a federally-funded project of the Rehabilitation Services Administration which was designed to create model evaluation units in six states, was in the process of selecting agency projects in which to field-test a set of project evaluation standards developed by another Federal contractor. What a splendid opportunity, we thought, to bring together our own emerging skills with an explicit need on the part of management and some specific resources developed by a nationally-known contractor! Thus, the decision was made to enter into a consultative relationship with the CAP director.

The first meeting of the evaluator and CAP director was a friendly disaster. The evaluator learned a lot about the CAP project and the CAP director learned a lot about program evaluation. But things began to fall apart when the discussion turned to an evaluation design for the CAP project. As a first step, the evaluator and the CAP director reviewed the legislation and regulations underlying the national program and the evaluation section of the CAP proposal of this agency. The CAP proposal essentially mirrored the statements of purpose included in the Federal regulations: e.g., "To increase client knowledge and understanding of Bureau of Rehabilitation services and processes, of client rights and responsibilities, of appeals mechanisms, of civil rights and of other public benefit programs." The problem is that this is a process statement--what the staff will do--not a product statement--what the staff will accomplish. Recalling the specificity of the agency manager, the evaluator continued to press for statements of product, outcome and accomplishment. For example, "What will happen as a result of this activity?" "What will the outcomes be?" Invariably, the CAP director's response was a restatement of the original process objective, "Clients will know Bureau of Rehabilitation services and processes..." And equally invariably, the evaluator's response was, "But how will we know that they know?" "What will they know?" "How many will know?" Then came the explosion: "You are forcing me into a position of declaring, in quantitative terms, what the specific outcomes of this project will be. I don't know what the outcomes will be. We have no history or experience to guide us yet. I was under the impression that the agency believed that these services were important in their own right."

The CAP director was absolutely correct, of course, and the evaluator felt duly chastened for exerting the pressure that he did under these cir-

cumstances. However, the fact remained that agency management required an evaluation design which would produce specific outcome information which would enable them to make decisions about level of funding in the subsequent fiscal year, especially if an extension grant were not approved for the project. Consequently, when the evaluator had successfully assured the CAP director that he should be viewed as a helper rather than as an adversary, he proposed a fresh approach. If deduction didn't work, perhaps induction would.

The evaluator pointed out that the CAP staff was engaged in a number of activities. These activities were not simply random events--"how-may-we-help-you" responses to every phone call. On the contrary, it was rather obvious that every activity had some specific purpose or expected outcome. As a matter of fact, as the CAP director began to describe specific activities, it became easier and easier to talk about anticipated outcomes. Why wouldn't it be possible to put these highly specific, highly individualized outcomes together in such a way that it would be possible to classify outcomes by type and generalize a set of programmatic outcomes and measurement criteria? This suggestion was so intuitively satisfying that we agreed to an assignment for the next session. The CAP director and her staff would make a list of all project activities--everything in which they were engaged over the course of the following week. Keeping the purpose and expected outcome of each activity in mind, we would group the activities in terms of common purposes or outcomes. This process should result in a set of objectives with known or anticipated outcomes which could be monitored for the purpose of outcome evaluation. Admittedly, these objectives might reflect what the project was actually doing rather than what agency management had intended it to do. But, given the uncertain beginnings of the project and the current director's ignorance of any management intentions for the project other than those process-like statements included in the enabling legislation and regulations, this would be a start--a base for negotiating with management with respect to other or additional expectations and outcomes.

Regrettably, the final chapter of this episode cannot be written at this point. The CAP director and her staff have identified literally scores of focused activities. Keeping the intended outcomes of these activities in mind, the CAP director and the program evaluator have identified six functional types of activity, each of which has the potential to be stated in the form of an objective with specific measurable outcomes. The resistance to this type of specificity is inevitably present, given the lack of a track record for the project and the fact that no other known project or program in the agency can serve as a model with respect to the specificity of its evaluation design. The temptation is always to slip back into those process statements which sound so good, but which are so difficult to evaluate.

Future steps will entail first, presenting the evaluation design to agency management for approval or negotiation of additional programmatic objectives. Then, being sure of a set of criteria for summative evaluation,

the CAP director and program evaluator will complete the design of an operational tracking system to measure the progress of the project toward its objectives and a data retrieval system to ensure the availability of accurate and useful information for both formative and summative evaluation.

The episodes reported in this article have portrayed the program evaluator in the role of evaluation consultant. This role is not entirely new to most program evaluators, of course. However, in most instances, ideally, the consultation takes place on the "front-end" of a program rather than in the middle. It is to be hoped that as managers become more aware of the utility of evaluative information for the decisions they have to make and as program administrators become more experienced in designing adequate evaluation into their programs from the beginning, the need for mid-course evaluation consultants will decrease. That should be a happier siutation for all concerned.

As indicated above, neither of the consultations reported in this article are complete at this writing. The author/consultant will be happy to share a descriptive report of the fruits of either or both with those who are interested when they are completed.

METHODOLOGY FOR DISCRETE EVALUATION

JANET SLIPOW, BILL BROWNFIELD, JACK HAYEK AND BEV KAUFFMAN
PROGRAM EVALUATION SECTION
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

The Program Evaluation Section (PES) of the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) has developed an evaluation methodology for use in discrete departmental evaluations. The methodology specifies the generic principles and procedures for these internal evaluations and will be presented and discussed with program managers during the preliminary evaluation activities. The purpose of the methodology is to promote the proper development of meaningful information for decisionmakers.

PES defines evaluation as the "process of delineating, obtaining, analyzing and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives" (Stufflebeam, 1973). The Section advocates two goals for all evaluation activities: (1) effective, useful and timely information sharing among the participants in the evaluation activity, and (2) technical accuracy in the development, implementation, and reporting of the evaluation activity.

As a consequence, six basic knowledges and strategies are highlighted throughout the evaluation methodology. PES will strive to maintain them during every step of the evaluation activity. The following list specifies these on-going knowledges and strategies:

(1) Understand the policy making process of the organization.

(2) Involve appropriate information users and audiences in the evaluation activities.

(3) Employ consulting skills throughout formal and informal sessions.

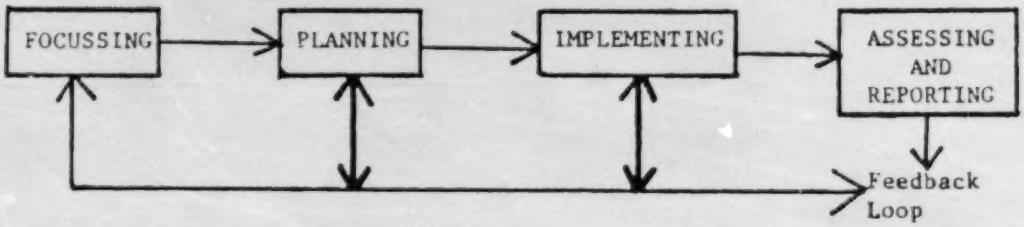
(4) Provide accurate information in a timely, relevant and applicalbe fashion.

(5) Adapt the evaluation activity to meet changing information needs.

(6) Develop and maintain a mutual, problem-solving approach.

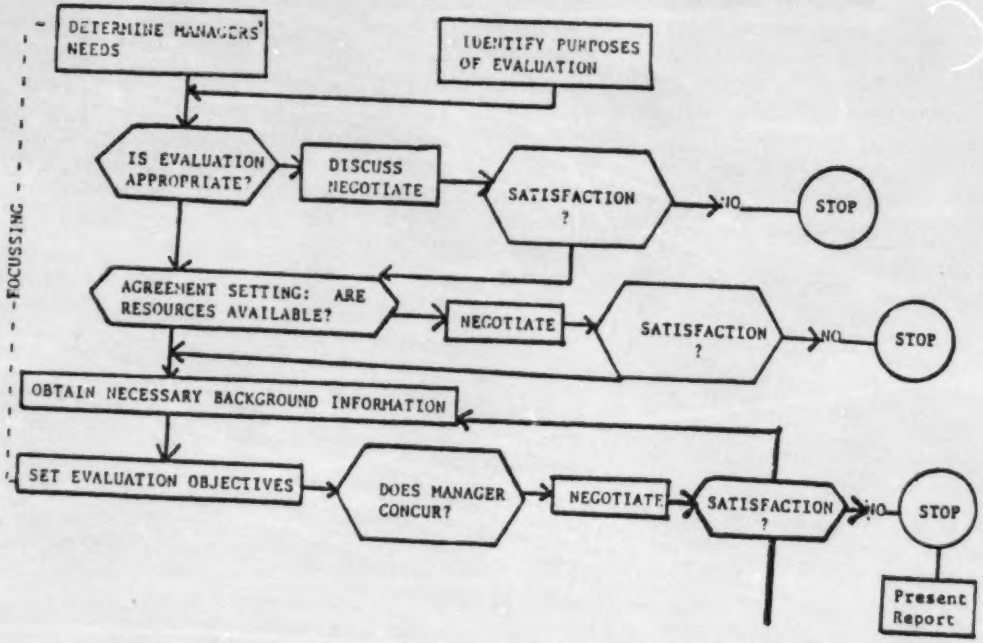
With these factors in mind, an overview of the methodology reveals its four stages: focussing, planning, implementing, assessing, and reporting. Focussing establishes the scope and objectives of the evaluation activity and emphasizes the active, early involvement of program participants. Planning produces the blueprint for conducting the evaluation activity and prepares for the dissemination of results and recommendations. Implementing obtains the necessary information, analyzes and interprets findings and provides results and alternatives to the decision makers. Assessing and reporting provides time for decision making, and a metaevaluation (a

DRS metaevaluation includes an evaluation of the evaluation effort, input, process, outcome, and the use of the resultant information). Eventually, an appropriate impact evaluation may evolve from this activity. Each of the four components are interdependent and a feedback loop exists among all four of the stages. A graphic portrayal of the overview follows:



Each stage of the evaluation methodology is further specified in the following sections of this article. A graphic portrayal of each stage is included with the description. In addition, a final schematic, inclusive of all elements of the process, is presented at the end of the narrative.

The flow of activities in the focussing stage of the evaluation follows.



The preliminary step in an evaluation activity is to determine the manager's needs. What does the manager want to know? The audiences of the evaluation must be identified (audiences include the decisionmakers and potential information users. With consulting assistance from PES, the managers will identify the purposes of the evaluation. How can the evaluation help the managers? Historically, evaluation requests have been made from upper management (the Commissioner's Office or one of the Assistant Commissioners). When this occurs, the managers will be brought into the evaluation effort and the rationale and purpose of the activity will be explained. In most cases, the managers will be asked to include key staff persons in the total effort. (Note: The term managers identifies appropriate staff persons in a particular evaluation effort.)

Once managers' needs and purposes are clarified, an important question must be answered, "Is evaluation appropriate?" At this time an analysis of the type of information necessary to satisfy the manager's purpose is made. Representative(s) from PES and the appropriate manager(s) discuss the area(s) of concern and provide applicable information. In these early developmental meetings key issues will be clarified. The Project Evaluation Team may be composed of PES staff appointed by the Program Evaluation Section and program personnel designated by the unit participating in the evaluation. The availability of program information and rights of confidentiality will be discussed. In addition, the practical implications of decisions based on alternative evaluation outcomes will be acknowledged and any bias and/or assumptions about the evaluation will be specified. PES emphasizes the effect of impressions developed during initial meetings and considers the development of a mutual, problem-solving relationship as beginning with the first encounter among the case of characters. As a consequence, during this and subsequent activities, communication to promote clarification and understanding is stressed. The terms discuss and negotiate and satisfactory? indicate this communicative, problem-solving strategy. If no agreement is reached and an impasse cannot be resolved, then the evaluation is stopped. If consensus is reached, the evaluation proceeds to the next focusing/decision making activity.

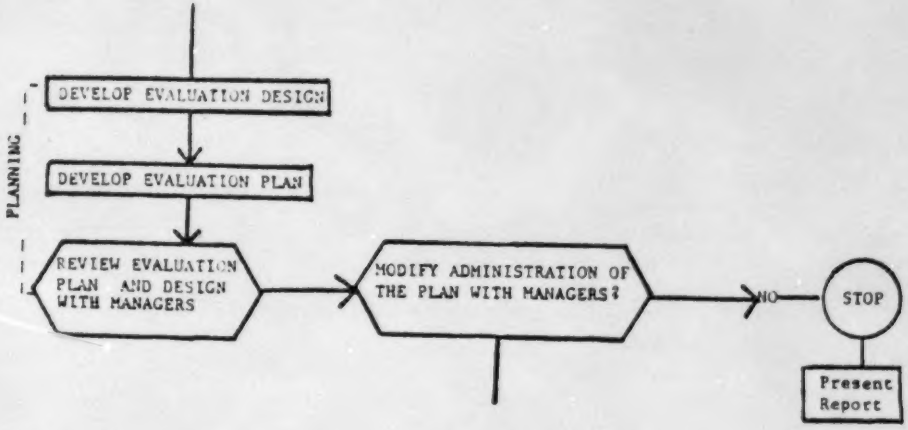
An evaluation agreement serves to provide a framework for the practical administrative tasks of the evaluation. With agreement, the cast of characters in the evaluation know general expectations and are able to plan appropriately with these in mind. PES names this decision block of the methodology, Agreement Setting: Are Resources Available? This agreement setting activity includes a discussion and negotiation of estimated costs, staff identification and definition and the allocated time frames for the completion of the activity. The time frames for completion of the activity focus on the managers' needs for the results and practical considerations for the conclusion of the activity. Again, should an impasse be irresolvable, then the evaluation activity would cease.

The agreement particularly emphasizes the explicit creation of the Project Evaluation Team. The Team conducts the evaluation, and as previously mentioned, is composed of staff persons from PES and from the program being evaluated. The role definitions for each person will be designated, such that PES and programmatic personnel will understand their particular duties. These individuals function as a team from this point until the conclusion of the evaluation, sharing technical responsibilities, troubleshooting any potential difficulties, and presenting conclusions and recommendations to the specified audiences.

Once resources are assessed and the agreement is set, the newly formed Project Evaluation Team researches the program to obtain necessary background information. An analysis of this information evolves into the setting of evaluation objectives. The precise evaluation objectives are reviewed with managers for concurrence. Should disagreement be irreconcilable, the Project Team returns to the background information to re-analyze

the context of the evaluation and managers are solicited again for concurrence. Systematically, should this process be continued more than three times, then the evaluation should be stopped and a report presented. However, PES does not envision this predicament occurring after thorough developmental efforts with the managers.

The next phase, the planning process, contains the following procedures:



The planning process involves the development of the evaluation design. During this phase each evaluation objective is reconstructed as an evaluation question(s). The purpose of the question is to direct the systematic collection of information. Consequently, it must be specific enought to contain "measurable concepts which can be investigated systematically, yet general enough to elicit information which is meaningful to decision makers" (Yavorsky, 1977, p. 59). The design should contain the rationale for posing the evaluation question (how the information will benefit the decision makers). It should designate the sources of the information (e.g., who will provide the instrument, how information will be collected and the type of instrument used to collect the information). Finally, the dates the information is needed should be specified (Yavorsky, 1977, pp. 57-62).

The Evaluation Plan is the administrative schedule of the activity. This action plan contains the process action steps for the implementation. Categories of information to be considered are: the activity, the evaluation question addressed, the dates of the activity, Team members coordinating and participating in the activity and other participants in the activity (Modified from Yavorsky, 1977, p. 79). For the administration of

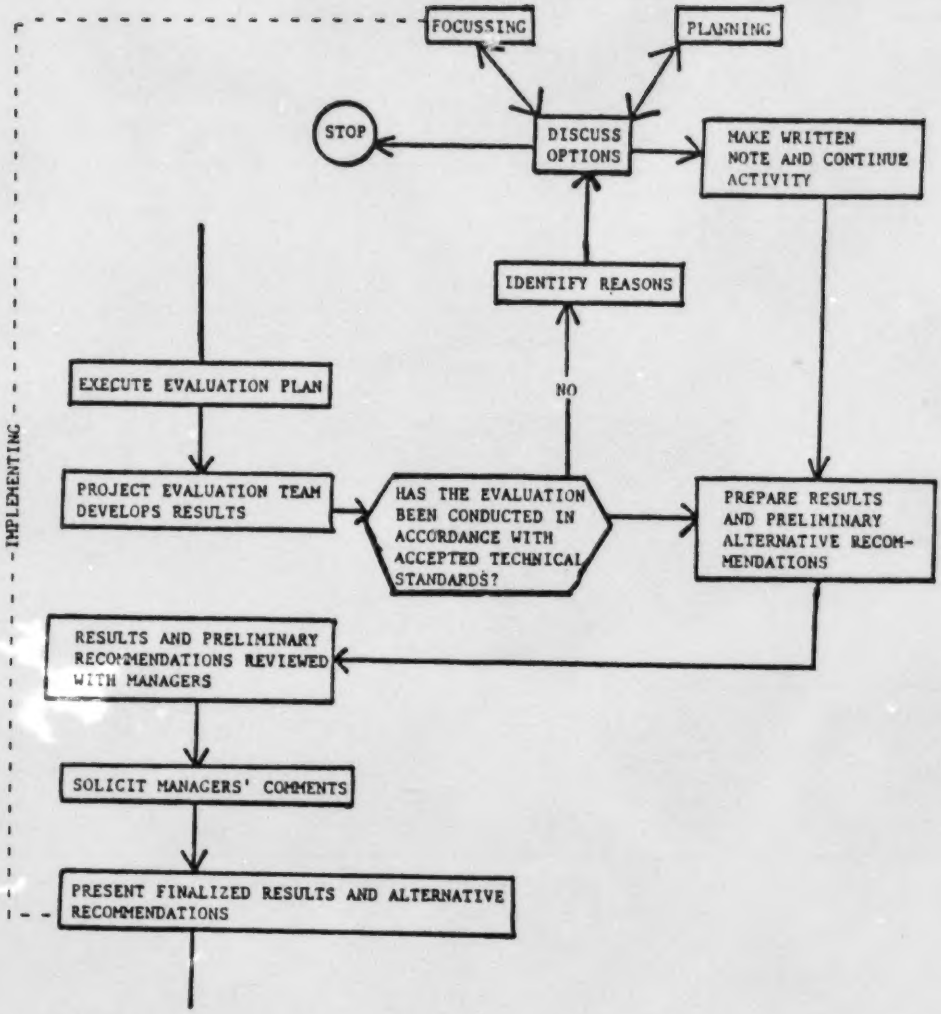
instruments, 1/ the categories should include instrument status (e.g. on hand, to be developed) evaluation question addressed, administration schedule, administrator(s), respondents, sampling procedure, data analysis procedure, data analysis, and date reports completed. (Yavorsky, 1977).

In addition, the Evaluation Plan includes a dissemination and utilization component. This designates who will receive what information, how (formally, informally), in what form, (oral presentation, executive summary, written report) and at what point during the evaluation activity. The metaevaluation is also scheduled at this time.

When the design and plan are completed, the Project Evaluation Team and managers meet to review the plan and to resolve any administrative scheduling difficulties which may arise. Should agreement be unattainable, then the evaluation is stopped and a report is presented.

After the planning is completed and managers are in agreement with the administrative works, the evaluation activity enters the action-oriented, implementing phase. A flow chart representing these activities follows:

1/ It is important to note that the development of instruments would demand an individual administrative schedule addressing such pertinent concerns as identification of coordinating staff persons, development of variables, reliability, validity, pretesting, any modifications, etc.


FOCUSSING
PLANNING
STOP
DISCUSS OPTIONS
MAKE WRITTEN NOTE AND CONTINUE ACTIVITY
IDENTIFY REASONS
NO
EXECUTE EVALUATION PLAN
PROJECT EVALUATION TEAM DEVELOPS RESULTS
HAS THE EVALUATION BEEN CONDUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ACCEPTED TECHNICAL STANDARDS?
PREPARE RESULTS AND PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS
RESULTS AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS REVIEWED WITH MANAGERS
SOLICIT MANAGERS' COMMENTS
PRESENT FINALIZED RESULTS AND ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS
IMPLEMENTING

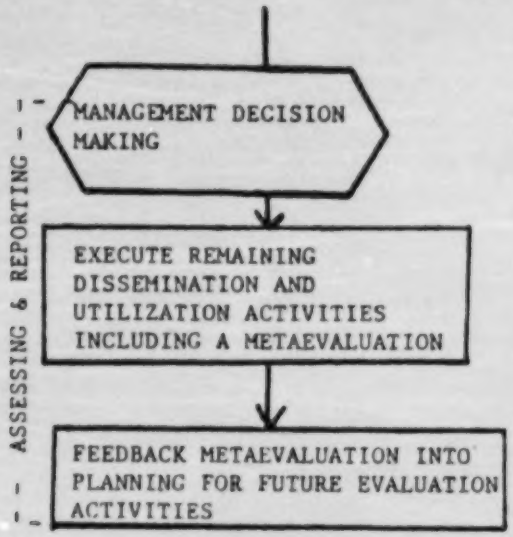
The Project Evaluation Team executes the Evaluation Plan implementing the actual data collection and analysis stages of the evaluation activity. When the analysis is complete the Project Evaluation Team develops the results by interpreting the data analysis. An answer to the question, "Has the Evaluation been conducted in accordance with technical standards?" is a process check to insure technical accuracy in the procedures. Technical accuracy is examined by relating the evaluation results to the evaluation objectives and considering the extent to which the objectives are met. The technical accuracy may also be checked for bias or faultiness by examining the sources of information, sampling procedures, instrument reliability and validity, analysis methods, or any other technical procedures. If the technical standards are found to be upheld, then the evaluation process continues and the Team prepares preliminary recommendations. If the standards have been violated, then the Team will identify reasons for the inaccuracies, and subsequently will discuss the feasible options. Options may be to (1) stop the evaluation; (2) return to the focussing phase and refocus the activity with managerial input; (3) return to the planning phase and replan and reconduct the data collection effort or (4) note the inaccuracies and go on with the evaluation process. These inaccuracies would be reported with results of the evaluation (Draft and Final Report).

After the technical accuracy has been determined, the Team prepares the results and preliminary, alternative recommendations. These are reviewed with managers. The concept of discussing draft findings with the managers and decisionmakers is one critical aspect of the methodology. Managers may have additional recommendations to suggest. In addition, managers may comment in writing about the evaluation. These comments will be included in the final written report.

Finalized results and alternative recommendations are presented to the audiences. Emphasis is placed on timely, usable, and accurate information provided in a manner which is understandable and appropriate for the audience.

The final presentation of the results and recommendations marks the end of the implementing stage of the methodology.

Assessing and reporting, the fourth and last phase, is summarized graphically on the next page.


ASSESSING & REPORTING
MANAGEMENT DECISION MAKING
EXECUTE REMAINING DISSEMINATION AND UTILIZATION ACTIVITIES INCLUDING A METAEVALUATION
FEEDBACK METAEVALUATION INTO PLANNING FOR FUTURE EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

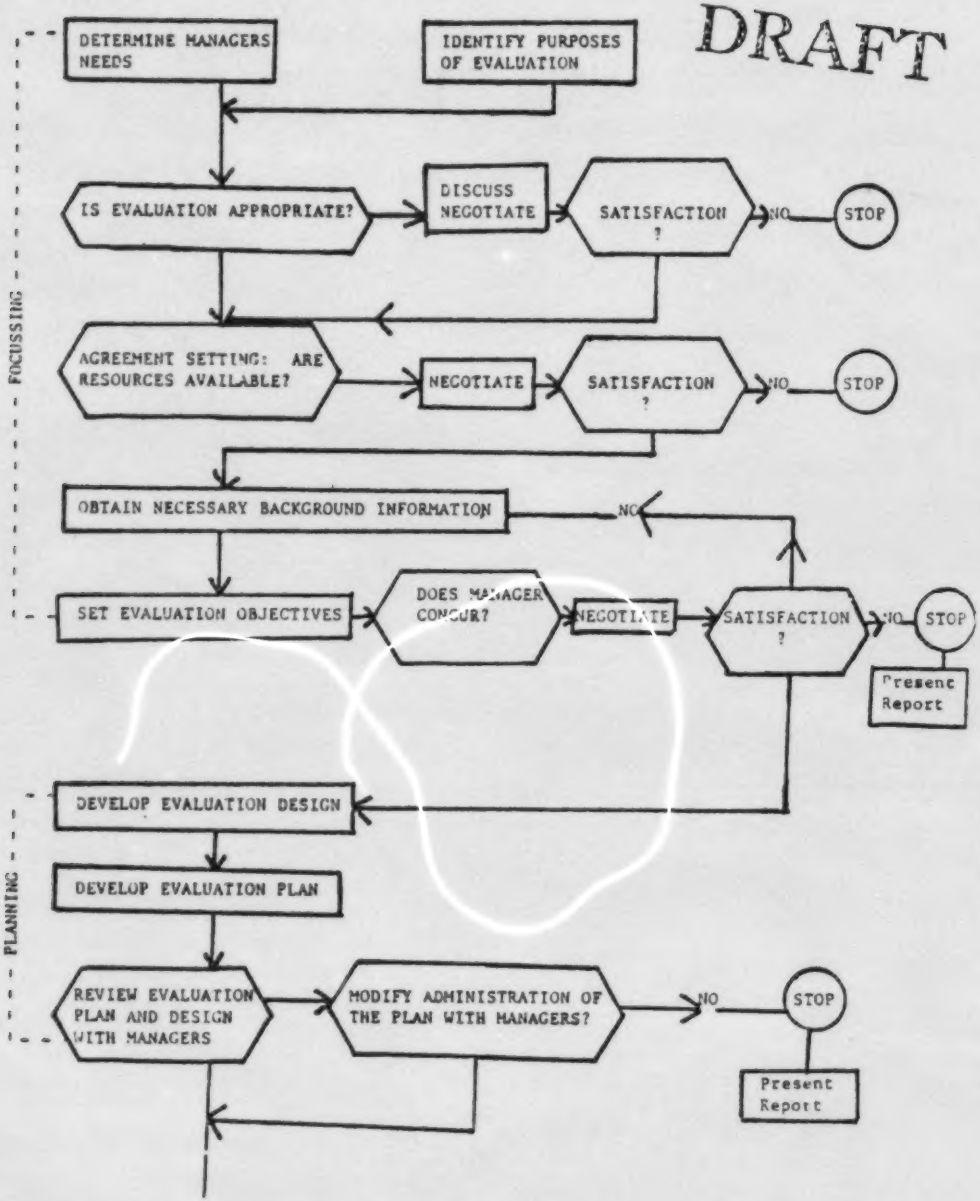
Decision making allocates time for management to determine what actions to take regarding the evaluation activity. The remaining dissemination and utilization activities will be executed based on the previously designed schedule. One feedback questionnaire, the metaevaluation, will be administered to key staff. It will include questions on the information usage and the input, process, and outcome of the evaluation activity.

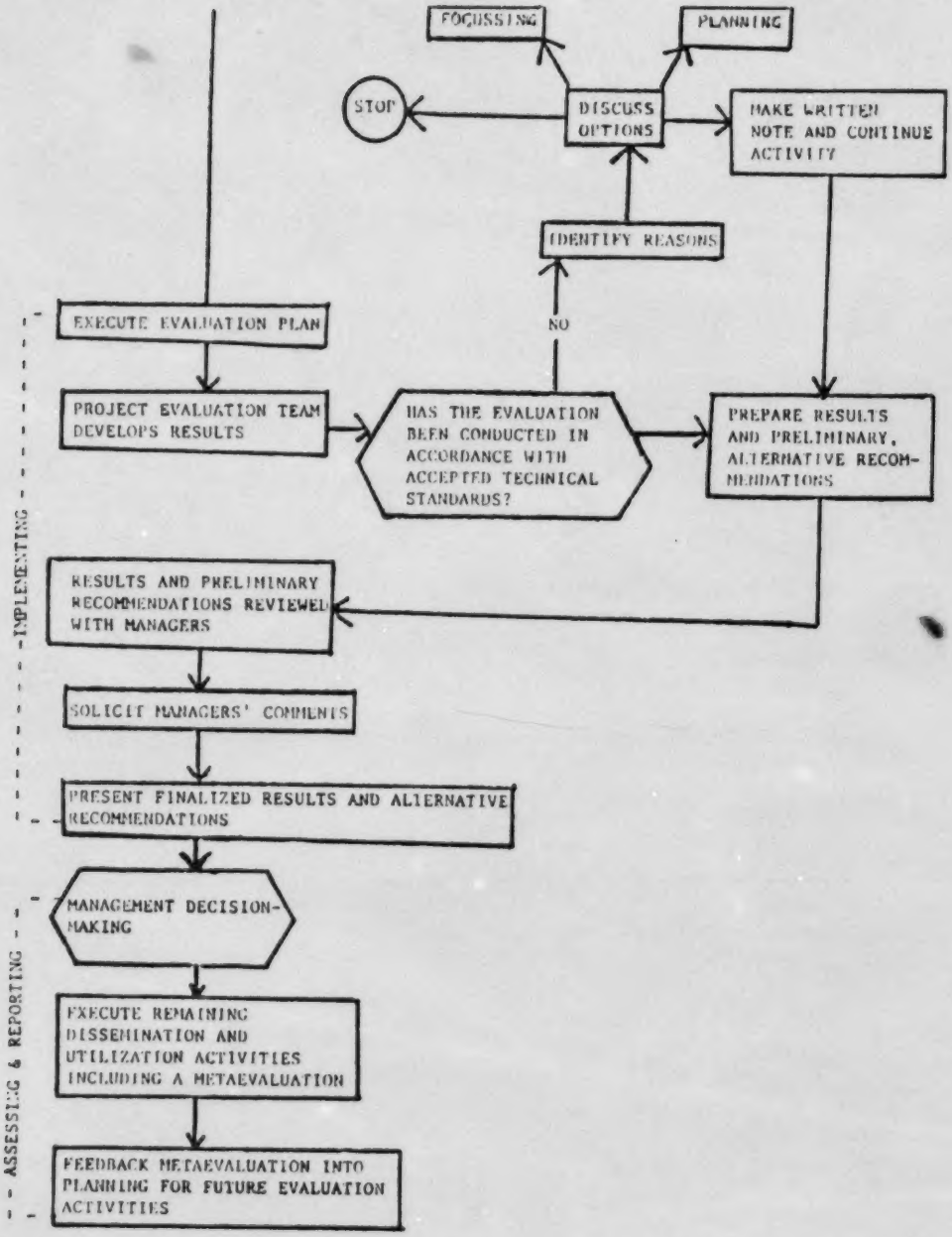
Should the decision makers choose to implement the recommendations from the evaluation activity, PES staff will be available for technical assistance in these activities. When appropriate, an impact evaluation will be made to follow-up on the evaluation activity.

Finally, the results from the metaevaluation instrument and managerial comments will be fed back into the proper planning for future evaluation activities. PES strives to support the changing information needs of decisionmakers. To uphold this ideal the Section plans to change, to revise and to grow appropriately.

Program Evaluation Section
Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services
May 15, 1980

DRAFT

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FEEDBACK METAEVALUATION INTO PLANNING FOR FUTURE EVALUATION ACTIVITIES
IMPLEMENTING
ASSESSING & REPORTING

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CASE REVIEW PROCESS IN PROGRAM EVALUATION

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We in Pennsylvania feel that in developing a comprehensive program evaluation plan, a case review process should be one program methodology in evaluation activities. A case review system has the capability of identifying base line case service patterns, thereby generating information for the initiation of or improvement of decision making in policy and procedure.

The extent and degree of the structure and activities of the case review process is contingent upon the personnel allocated by the state to evaluation and the needs of the state as seen by top management and other inputs.

Because of the proposed Federal Evaluation Standards which are currently being field tested by the Model Evaluation Unit states each state in the country will have to develop its own case review process or utilize an existing process developed by someone else.

To define program evaluation on a state level, it is very useful to identify procedures for utilization of information to improve decision making in vocational rehabilitation program planning, monitoring and revision. (Handbook of Program Evaluation Studies, Michigan Rehabilitation Research, 1978) This review of current state rehabilitation agency program evaluation studies further states that program evaluation studies can be divided into three broad areas: (a) input studies which provide information for use in program planning; (b) process studies which provide information for use in program monitoring; and (c) outcome studies which provide information for use in program revision or change. In this article our attention will be devoted to the process studies in program evaluation studies.

A process study such as a case review system is concerned with the case service patterns within the rehabilitation process. Examples of the type of information gathered from a case review system might be: (a) delayed movement of clients' cases in the rehabilitation process; (b) percentages of eligibility of served clients; and (c) suitability of selection of clients' vocational objectives. This type of compiled data would provide the appropriate people in the agency's case service, policy and planning sections a "nitty-gritty" information base for change, modification, development and implementation of policy and procedure.

For example, we can determine through statistical data the existing time frames in the movement of clients' cases from referred status to eligibility status. If we develop a standard of three months as an acceptable time frame for that movement we might learn that in 20 percent of our

cases there is delayed movement. With this statistical information as a base, a case review could be conducted on the 20-percent-delayed-movement-cases to determine reasons for the delay. An analysis of the case review findings would provide sufficient case service information to implement case service policy changes, modifications or clarifications.

Above all, a case review process should attempt to meet the specific needs of the individual VR agency using the process. In Pennsylvania we feel that we have a structured case review process that does meet our particular needs and allows for input from many levels.

The structured process begins with out field operations organization. The agency organization provides for four regional offices, each supervising the field activities of several district offices. A case service evaluator is assigned to each of these regional offices. But though these regional case service evaluators are assigned to the regional administrators, the central office Administrator of Evaluation maintains continuous and direct contact with the four to coordinate and direct case service evaluation activities. This dual supervision and control assures a thorough integration of staff and line activities in program evaluation and provides for the continuous flow of information to and from field activities.

The attached diagram (Figure 1) describes the relationships between the Central Office, Regional Office and District organization and the case review process. Utilizing this organizational structure, Pennsylvania's Case Review Process has the following objectives:

1. Evaluate documentation for state and Federal compliance.

2. Identify the strong and weak areas in case service patterns.

3. Evaluate the understanding of existing policy and procedure.

4. Identify inadequate policy and procedure.

5. Standardize, as much as possible, the interpretation and implementation of policy and procedure.

6. Promote a positive concept of evaluation's role within the vocational rehabilitation process context.

FIGURE 1

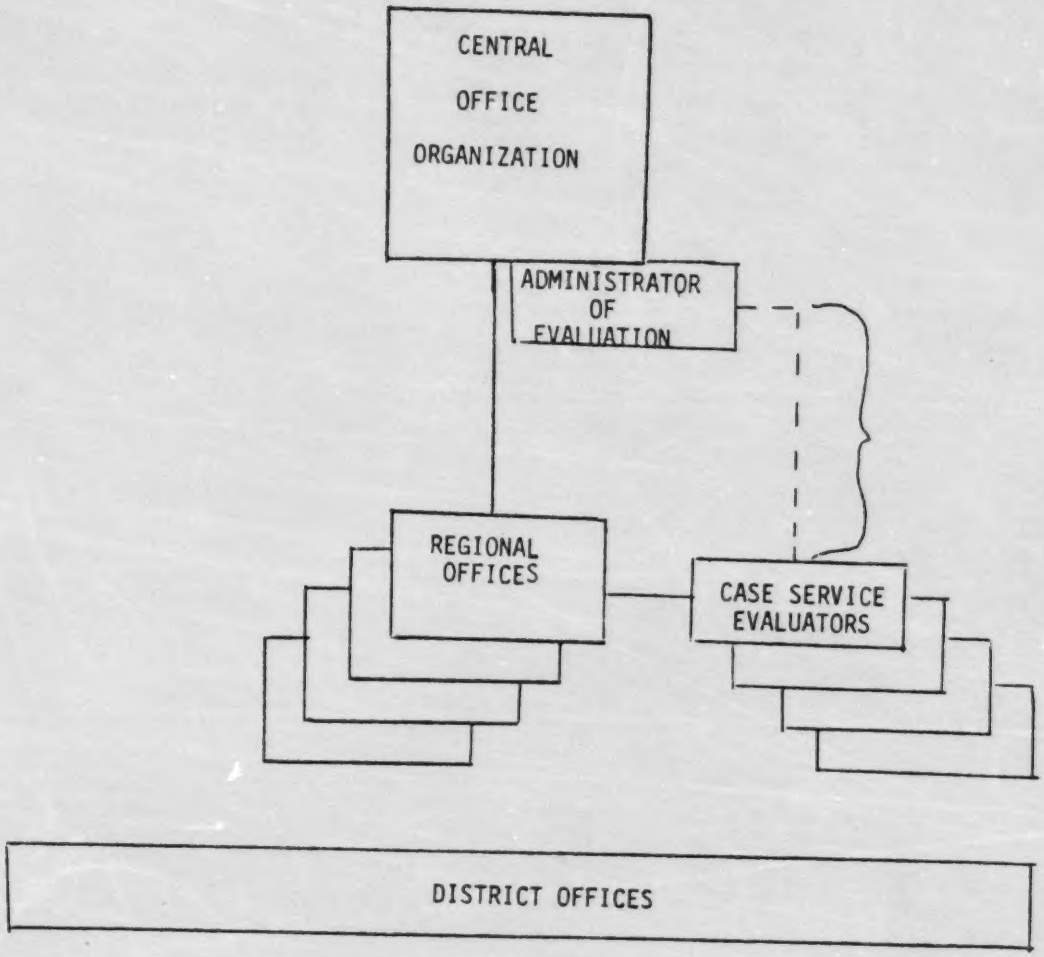
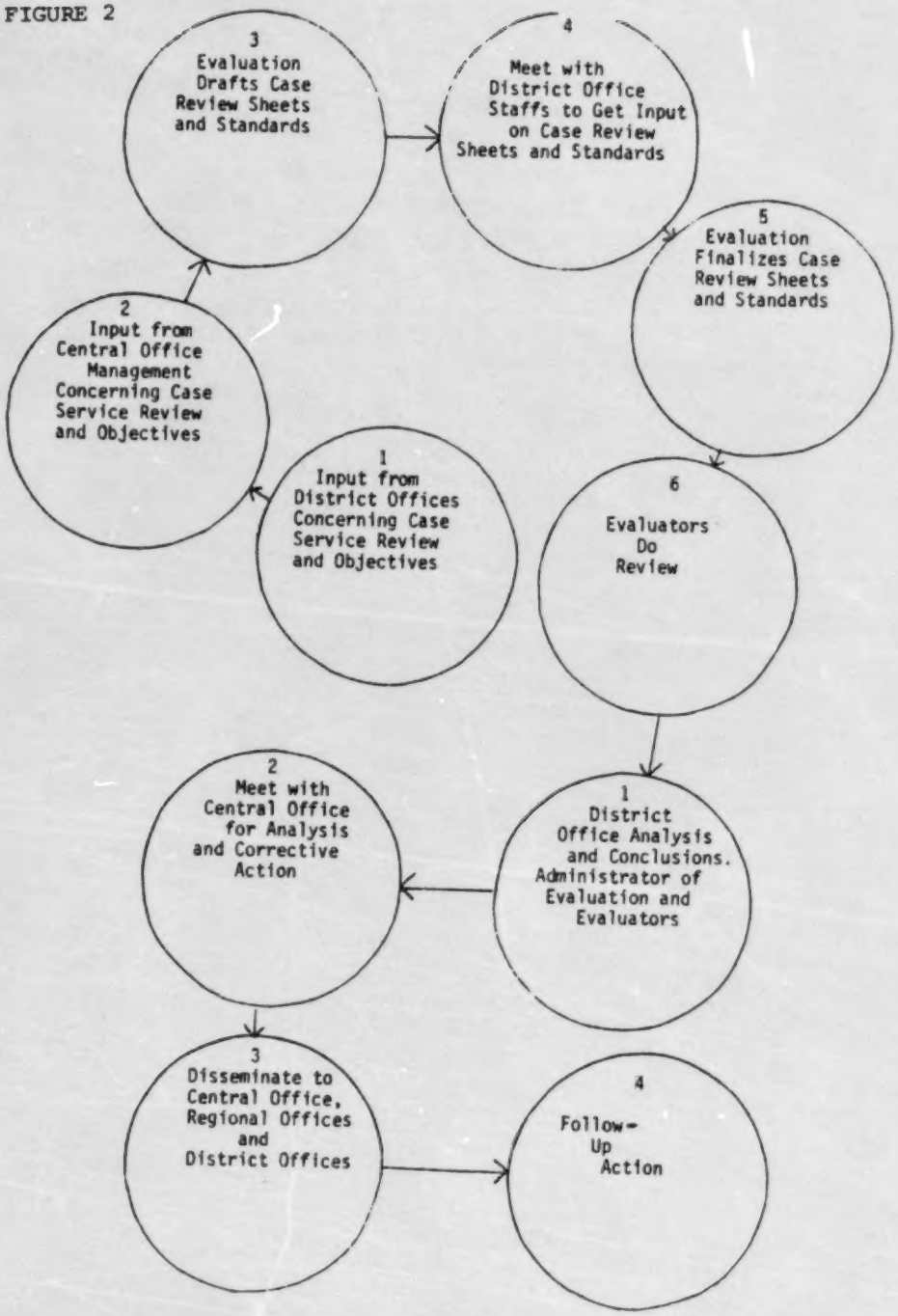

CENTRAL
OFFICE
ORGANIZATION
ADMINISTRATOR
OF
EVALUATION
REGIONAL
OFFICES
CASE SERVICE
EVALUATORS
DISTRICT OFFICES

FIGURE 2


3
Evaluation Drafts Case Review Sheets and Standards
4
Meet with District Office Staffs to Get Input on Case Review Sheets and Standards
5
Evaluation Finalizes Case Review Sheets and Standards
2
Input from Central Office Management Concerning Case Service Review and Objectives
1
Input from District Offices Concerning Case Service Review and Objectives
6
Evaluators Do Review
2
Meet with Central Office for Analysis and Corrective Action
1
District Office Analysis and Conclusions. Administrator of Evaluation and Evaluators
3
Disseminate to Central Office, Regional Offices and District Offices
4
Follow-Up Action

With these objectives in mind, the following system has been developed to implement the Case Review Process in Program Evaluation in Pennsylvania. This system has been further enhanced by Pennsylvania being a model unit state. Depending upon the Case Review and the circumstances, the steps outlined can be modified. (Figure 2 is a synthesis of the Case Review Process.)

I. Selection by Office of Administrator for Evaluation of Case Service Area for Review

A. Obtain input from a representative sampling of District Office personnel concerning Case Service areas that might be reviewed and the objectives for such review. District Office personnel might be District Administrator, Assistant District Administrator and supervisors.

B. Obtain input from Central Office Management concerning the Case Service areas that might be reviewed and the objectives and purposes for suggested reviews.

C. Through the above input crystallize and select a Case Service area for review and state the objectives of the review.

II. Development of Case Review Sheet and Standards

A. Each Regional Case Service Evaluator develops a list of appropriate questions to be used for the intended Case Review, and a copy of each list is sent to each of the other Case Service Evaluators and to the Administrator for Evaluation.

B. The lists of questions are reviewed at the regular monthly meeting of the Evaluators with the Administrator for Evaluation--reviewed for the purposes of deletion, addition, changes and the compilation of a single list.

C. Following the above meeting, and prior to the next monthly meeting, each Evaluator selects a few cases to review with the single list for appropriateness of the questions, and again completes his or her own list, which again is sent to each of the other Evaluators and to the Administrator of Evaluation for review.

D. At the second meeting the Evaluators again review the questions together and complete a final list of questions with standards, with categorization of areas of prime importance, using, if possible, an existing base of information such as R-300.

E. Following the second meeting each Evaluator pretests the final questions and standards by reviewing 15 cases of his or her own choosing.

F. At a third meeting, the list of questions used in the 15 case reviews are discussed. A question item analysis of the Case Review Sheet is performed for uniform interpretation and increased interrater reliability.

G. The Case Review Sheet and Standards are drawn up and completed by the group as a whole at this third meeting.

H. The final draft of the Case Review Sheet and Standards is presented to the appropriate Central Office management level for its review and input, and to a representative sampling of District Administrators for their review and input.

I. Office of the Administrator of Evaluation finalizes the Case Review Sheet and Standards.

III. Case Review

A. Meeting of Regional Case Service Evaluators to reinforce interrater reliability.

1. At a regular monthly meeting of the Evaluators, or a special meeting called for that purpose, there is discussion of interpretation of policy and procedure.

2. Standards and Case Review Sheet to be used are thoroughly reviewed.

3. Evaluators review a case with the developed Case Review Sheet and Standards.

4. Question interpretation for Case Review Sheet is developed.

B. Selection by office of Administrator of Evaluation of Cases to be reviewed.

1. Computer is used for selection of random and stratified sampling of cases to be reviewed.

2. Printout of client information is obtained and given to Case Service Evaluators.

3. Assistant Director of Field Operations notifies Regional Administrators and District Administrators of date of review, and the Administrator of Evaluation provides them with a list of cases to be reviewed.

C. When Case Review is completed, one copy of the Case Review Sheet is given to the District Administrator, one copy is sent to the

Administrator of Evaluation and the original is kept by the Regional Case Evaluator.

D. Case Service Evaluator prepares a summary of the evaluation findings in each District.

IV. Utilization of Case Review

A. Conference of District Office and Regional Office Personnel

1. Allowing at least three weeks of District Office staff to review evaluation findings, the Regional Administrator establishes a date for a conference with District Office personnel including the District Administrator, Assistant District Administrator and District Office Supervisors. Regional Office personnel are the Regional Administrator, Assistant Regional Administrator and Regional Case Service Evaluator.

2. Evaluation findings are reviewed and discussed--strong and weak areas identified, problem case service patterns and areas pinpointed, need for clarification or modification of procedures studied, etc.

3. District Office gives its evaluation of the evaluation results, and presents the procedure or method it intends to use to disseminate and utilize evaluation results and to implement corrective action where necessary.

4. Procedures to be used for follow-up are discussed.

B. Report of Case Review and Evaluation Conference by Regional Office

Following the Case Review and Evaluation Conference the Case Service Evaluator and Regional Administrator submit a report on the conference to the Administrator of Evaluation, which report includes:

1. Identification of problems in and recommendations for solutions to such problems in case service areas.

2. The expressed opinions of the District Office regarding the Case Review.

3. An outline of the District Office's plans for dissemination and utilization of the Evaluator's findings to supervisors and counselors, and plans for implementation of corrective action where deemed necessary.

C. Report of Administrator of Evaluation

Following the receipt by the office of the Administrator of Evaluation of all completed evaluation review forms, District Office Summary Evaluations, and reports of District Office Case Evaluation Conferences, the procedure is as follows:

1. The material from the case reviews is compiled, reviewed and evaluated.

2. The Administrator of Evaluation, after analyzing the case review data, drafts a report of conclusions and recommendations.

3. The draft is presented to various Central Office management levels (Director, Assistant Director, Planning Section, Field Operations, and the Training Section) for review and input.

4. To obtain a user's perspective several District Administrators asked for input on both content and format of the draft.

5. The final product, written by the Administrator of Evaluation, is distributed to the Director, Assistant Director, Planning Section, Field Operations, Training Section, Regional Administrators and District Administrators.

D. Implementation of Changes

1. The Administrator of Evaluation and staff meet with Assistant Director of the agency and appropriate central office staff to discuss implementation of recommendations based on the final report. Final decisions on acceptance or rejection of recommendations and implementation of changes are made by the Assistant Director.

2. The staff of the Administrator of Evaluation and the Regional Case Service Evaluators are available as resource people to those involved in the implementation of changes.

V. Follow-Up

Following completion of the implementation procedures, the Regional Case Service Evaluators, as directed by the Administrator of Evaluation, spot check to determine if directed changes are, in fact, being implemented.

To date, in Pennsylvania, we have been utilizing our Case Review Process for approximately three years, have gained meaningful experiences and added another dimenstion to our evaluation program. The fact that our

experience with Case Review has been positive is due, we feel, in a large measure to careful planning and preparation, trained personnel and the commitment of top management people. For any evaluation program to have real meaning and value, a strong commitment by top management is an absolute necessity--we are fortunate in Pennsylvania to have this. No less important is an adequate and trained staff of case reviewers which not only insures that the work will be done correctly but establishes credibility with the field staff, another important factor in the success of any evaluation program. The four full-time case service reviewers were trained for approximately three months before assuming the responsibilities of their new positions. The careful planning and preparation that is necessary includes the preparation of the field staff to accept the evaluation process.

As Eric Hoffer states in his book, The Ordeal of Change (1963), "Even in slight things the new is rarely without some stirring of foreboding." All agencies, at one time or another, have had some type of case reviews. However, if an agency develops and implements a structured and permanent case review process as part of policy there may be some "stirrings of foreboding." To prevent this we suggest an awareness type of training at all levels prior to the implementation of the case review process. The purpose of this training would be to present the "how, why and where" of the case review system. If personnel are aware of the purposes and procedures there will be a minimum of stirring. In Pennsylvania we produced a video tape of the Case Review Process through our Training Section. This video tape was shown in each of our 15 District Offices. Following the showing of the tape a team of BVR personnel made up of individuals from Case Service Section, Evaluation Section, and Training Section were available for questions and comments. In attendance at these meetings were all personnel in the District Office, and our experience with this training and the outcome were very positive.

The Case Service Review Process, like program evaluation in general, is neither simple nor easy, but in Pennsylvania we have found it well worth the effort.

BENEFIT-COST ANALYSIS AS A TOOL IN PROGRAM EVALUATION

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Human wants and desires are unlimited but the resources to satisfy these wants are limited or scarce. Scarcity of resources then necessitates choices or preferences. The process of choice-making creates the notion we call "the opportunity cost." The opportunity or social costs are defined as "the value of resources that would have been available for other uses had special services not been rendered" (Conley, 1969). To make effective decisions on resource allocation, be it in the private sector or public sector, management needs techniques of program analysis and evaluation.

Benefit-cost analysis seeks to identify investment projects or decisions that will "maximize the present value of all benefits less that of all costs, subject to specified constraints" (Prest & Turvey, 1965). Expressed in the language of welfare economics, the objective is to rank alternative investments in order to select those which have potential for yielding Pareto optimum -- an improvement that makes at least one person better off and nobody worse off.

Investment decisions in the private sector are fairly easy to make because the costs and benefits of alternative courses of action and alternative resource uses can be measured with reasonable accuracy. However, investment decisions in the public sector, particularly in the area of human resources development, are difficult to make due to the imperfect nature of the market in the field of human resources. In the development of human resources the net benefits may be high, but they are frequently so diffused that many single individuals cannot capture enough of them, or have a sufficiently long-term perspective, to justify the additional investment even when high and quick returns can be captured. Then there are difficulties of measuring qualitative and non-economic attributes. Yet, a quantitative evaluation of benefits and costs of alternative programs is surely required for rational decision-making in government planning. Benefit-cost analysis, therefore, can only be one test of the program's worth to be balanced against the broader humanitarian and social considerations.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF BENEFIT-COST ANALYSIS

The origins of the human capital theory lie in the work of Sir William Petty, a 17th century English economist. He tried to estimate the value of human capital by using annual per capita income, interest and the number of Englishmen during his time; and then using

by war, disease or migration.

In the United States, an exceptional growth of manpower (employment and training) policies occurred during the decade of the 1960s. These policies originated in the early years of the decade to help combat substantial unemployment and long-run structural imbalance in the economy and they continued to expand throughout the decade. There was a growing need to evaluate these manpower programs to determine their impact on the economy. Although perfection is far from achieved and evaluation techniques have varied tremendously, a large number of economic evaluations have been made in the manpower area (Palomba, 1979).

Evaluations in the manpower area have at best looked at the economic impact upon program clients of various manpower programs from the viewpoint of individuals, society and government. None of these evaluations has been able to measure either the indirect economic impact or the non-economic impact of manpower programs. Three recent major studies have reviewed hundreds of evaluations of manpower programs -- the Goldstein study (1972), the Barsby study (1972) and the Wharton School study (1975). These reviews highlight four major conclusions:

1. Manpower programs have been effective from an economic viewpoint. The poverty gap has been reduced but not eliminated for the clients of these programs.

2. Skill training and job development programs are more successful from the economic viewpoint than employability development or work experience programs.

3. The most economically efficient programs have been vocational rehabilitation (VR), vocational education, and MDTA (Manpower Development and Training Act) skill training, specifically on-the-job training.

4. Fifty percent or more of the economic gains of manpower programs have been due to an employment effect (increased hours of work), as opposed to a wage effect (increased level of wages).

The indirect economic impact of manpower programs could be very important in measuring the efficiency of manpower programs. A manpower program can have either a positive (vacuum effect) or negative (displacement effect) economic indirect impact, if non-clients in the society are helped or hurt by the program. A vacuum effect occurs when clients are trained for higher skilled jobs (skill and wage levels will increase), their previous jobs to be taken by lesser skilled non-clients. Such an effect would understate the total impact of a program. A displacement effect occurs when the clients are placed in jobs at the expense of non-clients.

effect would overstate the total impact of a program.

The reviews of manpower programs show that a large part of the change in income is caused by an employment effect. Therefore, future evaluations of manpower programs must attempt to separate wage and employment effects.

BENEFIT-COST ANALYSIS IN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The growing use of the planning-programming-budgeting (PPB) system in evaluating public expenditures has been accompanied by a growing understanding of the complexities of the methodological and conceptual problems facing benefit-cost analysts. Several benefit-cost studies of the Federal-state rehabilitation programs as a whole or of its component parts have been undertaken since 1965. These have been used primarily to win support for increased program expenditures (Noble, 1977).

In recent years there have been both internal and external motivations for the development of program evaluation efforts in state VR agencies. Externally, among others, there has been increased demand for accountability in human services. The 1973 Rehabilitation Act contains a requirement that evaluation standards be devised and implemented to measure the performance of the VR program in achieving its mandate. The program evaluation standards include "benefit-cost and cost effectiveness" as one of the performance standards. Also, there has been a growing emphasis on data-based program development. The goal of program development is to design optimal programs which help clients achieve specific outcomes utilizing available staff and resources.

Benefit-cost analysis lends itself to predictive uses. That is, it will tell us the results of alternative allocations of resources within programs and to a lesser extent between programs (Sewell, 1965). Some program administrators may have fears that too narrow an economic interpretation of the comparative benefits and costs of programs which have important social and human values might undermine and distort both the objectives of programs and endanger their case for expanding them. However, in practice, it has not been possible to use benefit-cost ratios to compare VR programs except in the most general terms. Each VR program has its own set of internal and external benefits and costs and each has its own model built to fit its particular circumstances. In general, therefore, the benefit-cost models are much more useful for altering or otherwise improving the effectiveness of a single VR program than they are for making comparisons between programs.

Furthermore, benefit-cost analysis imposes a very valuable discipline on the decision-making processes of program administrators and policy-makers. It requires a clear articulation of objectives (for the purposes

of quantification) and a precise methodology for determining exactly how these objectives are being met. By identifying the amount and incidence of the benefits and costs for the clients, society and the government, the benefit-cost model will provide a structure for analytic interpretation which will facilitate program monitoring. The mere act of gathering the data and structuring the analysis for a benefit-cost model will help identify the problem areas within the VR program and facilitate changes in the combination of factors employed, or in the level and structure of services offered to the clients (Majumder, Greever, & Palomba, 1978). The applications of micro benefit-cost analysis based on continuing program benefits and cost data are numerous. For example, by comparing the client's past work history with his/her activities and earnings after VR training we can judge what kinds of clients use the program to greatest advantage. Do older clients do better than younger? Do the clients in fact use the VR training? Do they increase their income over time as a result of the training? Are they less likely to be unemployed?

All of this kind of analysis and the decisions which flow from it must be undertaken with the full realization of the practical limitations of benefit-cost analysis, as opposed to ultimate theoretical limitations. No benefit-cost model as yet measures precisely what it purports to measure because of the need to use proxies on both the benefits and costs sides of the model.

Some effort is being made by the Research and Training Center Staff at Baylor University to measure the qualitative benefits accruing from rehabilitation using psychometrics. When their study is completed it might provide some insight as to how some of the intangible benefits resulting from rehabilitation could be assessed. Of course, it should be remembered that this will still not solve the problem of determining the range and scope of <u>total benefits</u>, combining both market and non-market measures of benefits into a single global measure. But it is certainly a step in the right direction.

BENEFIT-COST ANALYSIS: WHERE ARE WE AND WHERE ARE WE GOING?

We can summarize our thoughts by saying that benefit-cost analysis has come a long way in just two decades, but as an evaluation tool there is still major development work to be done before it can be used extensively. The major problem areas that remain include: (1) developing an inexpensive but reliable control mechanism so that we can accurately measure economic benefits and costs: (2) developing a method to estimate the indirect economic benefits and costs (vacuum effect and displacement effect); and (3) developing a method to incorportae non-economic benefits into the benefit-cost evaluation tool. It will take <u>at least</u> two more decades to solve these three problem areas.

Problem area (1) can be solved by using various before-after control mechanisms and checking the results periodically with a live control group until an inexpensive control mechanism is found which is reliable. Since live control groups are so expensive at best they can only be used periodically. Thus, finding a before-after control mechanism that can roughly predict live control group results at a fraction of the cost is imperative. We are optimistic that this can be done.

Problem area (2) will be more difficult. Here attempts will have to be made to estimate wage effects and employment effects in the area of economic benefits so that a reasonable estimate can be made of vacuum effects and displacement effects. Until this problem area is resolved evaluators will have to be content to use benefit and cost data for clients only (direct economic benefits and costs).

The third problem area will be the most difficult to handle. It could be quite some time before anyone can properly combine economic benefits and non-economic benefits into one global measure of benefits. This is the most serious fault with benefit-cost analysis. The problem is that while economic costs are probably the only non-trivial costs of a social action program, the economic benefits are probably not the only non-trivial benefits. One approach in this area may be to conduct an economic benefit-cost evaluation, and then simply list non-economic benefits as seen fit. Thus, at some future point in time evaluators might be able to make statements about a social action programs such as: this program cost $1 million to treat 400 clients; however, we estimate that the 400 clients will earn $600,000 more during their lifetime, their divorce rate will be 10 percent less and their feelings toward themselves will be 8 percent higher according to some acceptable evaluation scale.

Benefit-cost analysis is too good not to use but not good enough to use exclusively.

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PUTTING THE HORSE BEFORE THE CART: OR, A CASE FOR VR AGENCY MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS BEFORE EVALUATION

Mississippi Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

Evaluation--what it is and is not, what it does and does not, why it is necessary and why not, what it should and should not consist of, even the definition for the term"evaluation"--is the subject of much debate and concern in the world of vocational rehabilitation. Increased demands for accountability from both the Federal and state levels of government make evaluation of VR programs expediently necessary if agencies expect continued and/or increased funding. The state-of-the-art in VR presently leans toward evaluation outcomes as valid indicators of an agency's success or lack of success in rehabilitation of clients. Thus, evaluation as a measuring device, is being embraced by VR as never before. This new awareness of and appreciation for total program evaluation is in itself desirable; however, the agency that attempts total program evaluation prior to developing, testing, and installing a formal system of management information is in for a rude awakening. A logical refutation of this statement is the fact that some VR agencies have done credible jobs of rehabilitating clients without management information systems and these agencies can produce credible statistics to verify their consistency of 26's. So then, why is a management information system a necessary prerequisite for total program evaluation, and why does program evaluation in the absence of a sound management information system constitute putting the cart before the horse?

First, let us agree that just as a rose by any other name smells as sweet, evaluation, by any other definition, is still the appraisal of an activity to determine its significance or worth. Admittedly there are agency staff evaluators, consultants from specialized firms, universities and research and development centers, and other experts who have much more flowery definitions of evaluation and who, in all probability, have their own unique approach to evaluation. While these definitions and approaches to evaluation are not being challenged, it appears that the simple definition of evaluation herein cited and the approach to evaluation through a sound management information system have equal merit. As to a management information system let us define it in simple terms as well by saying that in a VR agency a management information system is the method of providing to decision makers the information they need to plan, execute, and control operations of the agency. For example, what information does an agency's fiscal officer need to plan the agency's annual budget; or, what information does an agency director need to determine the geographical distribution of counselors in a state? The answers to these questions, and the method by which these answers are provided, constitute a management information system. In all likelihood, VR administrators have all the information they need, but this information is probably not supplied in a form which is usable or systematic enough for it to be valid. Thus, managers at any level in VR need some concept of what information is

needed, in what form it is needed, criteria by which to evaluate the information, and some concept of timeliness. Summarily, a management information system can be as simple or as complex as the agency manager's demand based on their decisionmaking needs. What of the agency with its proud history of consistent 26s and no management information system? The agency simply does not exist. While there may have been no formal (written) plan for management information, some management information system has been in operation because decisions have been made to produce the record of 26s. The system may have been the intuition of top management, the collective intuition of an oligarchy, or benevolent dictatorship--but, a system existed!

Now that we are armed with simplistic, though sound, definitions of the terms "evaluation" and "management information system" we can regress to answer the original question: how does attempting total program evaluation prior to installing a formal management information system constitute putting the cart before the horse?

The existence of a formal management information system (formal meaning written) denotes the existence of several important conditions which, in turn, permit objective program evaluation. Basically, these conditions are: (1) a well defined organizational structure; (2) a clear understanding of the legal responsibilities of the agency; (3) a method for systematic planning involving input from all agency strata; and (4) a well defined mission statement supported by realistic, flexible goals and measurable objectives. Before examining the importance of each of these conditions, it should be noted that there are various types of management information systems and the one an agency opts to use depends on factors peculiar to that agency. Regardless of the type of management information system developed, one factor is critical in all of them: willingness to accept change. Agency management which is oligarchic or benevolently dictatorial will not find it easy, to cite the old cliche, to give up the bird in the hand for the possible two or three which management information indicates are possibly in the bushes. Yet, the purpose of a management information system is to provide decisionmakers with just such information, and the purpose of evaluation is to determine the significance or worth of the proposed activity which might yield two birds as well as the activity which has proven to yield one bird. Thus evaluation and management information, though strange bedfellows, complement each other.

As one of the conditions resulting from a management information system, what does organization structure have to do with evaluation? First, and perhaps foremost, organization structure in the VR agency delineates the allocations of tasks necessary for the rehabilitation of clients. In VR, the rehabilitation of the client is not the sole purview of the counselor; rather, each agency staff person contributes to the client's rehabilitation through the performance of his assigned tasks. This interdependency element makes it necessary that each staff person have an assigned place in the agency hierarchy and a written job description which clearly outlines his responsibilities, to whom he is responsible, and, how the successful

accomplishment of his assigned tasks impacts the tasks of his unit and of the overall agency. Organizational structure further insures that management has a firm understanding of staff duties, that management distributes responsibility (power) and that management, through organizational structure, can allocate tasks resulting from the levy of new mandates or alteration in mandates to the appropriate staff level. Looking at organizational structure from the point of view that it is a functional tool which serves to further the ultimate end of rehabilitating clients, the relationship between organization structure and evaluation becomes more understandable. Thus, whether an individual staff member is being evaluated to determine whether or not he has successfully contributed to the agency's purpose through completion of his assigned tasks; or, whether the organizational structure itself is being evaluated to determine how well it serves to further the agency's mission, the existence of an organization structure that is supportive of a system of management information has a high probability for being successfully evaluated.

Almost daily changes in policy affecting local VR operations are handed down from the Federal government and in some instances, the state government as well. A clear understanding of what an agency is legally responsible for is one of the bonuses of a management information system. Decisions as to how an agency handles Federal and state mandates should be reflected in the agency manuals or handbooks, which means that once again a management information system is needed to systematically take care of such situations. How does a clear understanding of what an agency is legally responsible for facilitate evaluation? This question can satisfactorily be answered by citing that the Mississippi MEU, in the process of developing a Basic Management Paradign for Mississippi Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind, developed a Compliance Activities Matrix consisting of some twenty (20) activities, Federal and state, for which the agency is responsible during the course of a fiscal year. Comprising the agency's legal responsibilities, these twenty (2) compliance activities run the gamut from continuing studies to required reviews. In a management information system, such a matrix provides management with: (1) a listing of all compliance activities; (2) required completion dates which provide management with some basis for determining initiation dates; (3) a basis for allocating staff and time necessary for conducting the compliance activity; and, (4) periodic review and reappraisal of agency approaches to conducting tasks necessary to comply with mandates.

Evaluation of an agency must necessarily address whether or not the agency is in compliance with Federal and state mandates--legal responsibilities. A management information systems makes the process of evaluating this facet of an agency's operation a less complicated task. It should be noted here that a clear understanding of an agency's legal responsibilities does not exclude those responsibilities which the agency sets for itself. In fact, when reviewing the Mississippi MEU's Compliance Activities Matrix, a number of other areas of agency interest were discovered. The VR agency genuinely concerned with its mission of rehabilitating the client will naturally move to independently take on the "discovered"

areas of interest, and evaluation will also reflect those agency projects which are the outgrowth of legal responsibilities.

Systematic planning involving input from all agency strata is another essential feature of a management information system which impacts the evaluation process. To assure that each staff person in an agency recognizes his job assingment as supportive of his component's tasks and necessary to the success of the agency in rehabilitating clients, a management information system should encompass all agency levels in planning agency activities. Planning in an agency is a tri-fold process: individual planning for individual activities; small group planning for component activities; and, administrative planning for the overall agency. Administrative planning for the total agency should utilize the input of the small group (component) and the indivudal. It was noted earlier in this article that each staff member in an agency contributes, directly or indirectly, to the rehabilitation of the client; thus, each staff person has a vested interest in the agency's overall success. Planning from the individual level up to and through the administrative level should reflect activities which will lead to the ultimate end desired by the agency.

It is impossible to engage in planning without a clear understanding of an agency's legal responsibilities and without an organizational structure which permits input of ideas from one level to the next. When agency planning is evaluated, the input of ideas should be easily traceable from top to bottom or bottom to top. Additionally, evaluation of agency planning within the confines of management information can move past addressing quantitative items such as how many activities were planned to addressing qualitative aspects such as how well were activities planned, to what degree were the plans initiated and completed, and what impact did the planning and conduct of the activities have on the agency's desired end.

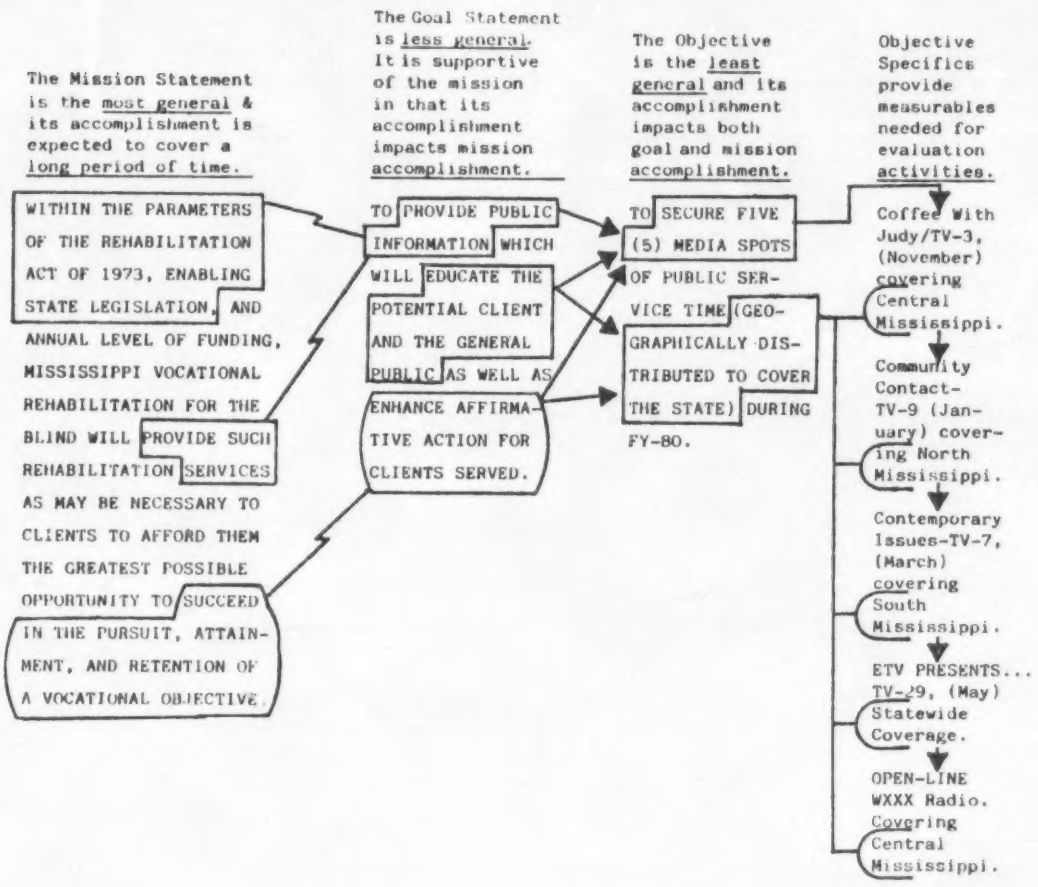
It would seem logical that before an agency could begin total program evaluation, it should have in writing, and as part of its management information system, a mission statement, realistic yet flexible goals, and measurable objectives. When queried as to the mission of VR, the stock and truthful response is "to rehabilitate people." It is therefore in the best interest of VR agencies to put in writing their plan for rehabilitating people. If the plan is not in writing, how can it be evaluated? If an agency has a management information system, it is virtually impossible not to have a mission statement, goals and objectives. One could, of course, fall back on counting the 26s, but we have already established that this alone does not equal total program evaluation.

Establishing a mission statement, goals and objectives as part of an agency's management information system is not a difficult matter. In fact, most VR agencies probably have a mission statement, goals and objectives stated in some form in the various documents they produce. The mission statement, goals and objectives of Mississippi Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind were culled from the agency's annual reports, brochures, state plan, etc. As illustration, consider the following diagram which is

taken from the Basic Management Paradigm being developed by the Mississippi MEU for Mississippi Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind:

MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS FROM MISSION STATEMENT TO OBJECTIVE SPECIFICS

A simple method used by the E/M Unit to maintain relationship from mission statement-goal-objective and objective specifics is illustrated here. The method is simply to move from the broadest point to the most specific point.


The Mission Statement is the most general & its accomplishment is expected to cover a long period of time.
The Goal Statement is less general. It is supportive of the mission in that its accomplishment impacts mission accomplishment.
The Objective is the least general and its accomplishment impacts both goal and mission accomplishment.
Objective Specifics provide measurables needed for evaluation activities.
WITHIN THE PARAMETERS OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973, ENABLING STATE LEGISLATION, AND ANNUAL LEVEL OF FUNDING, MISSISSIPPI VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FOR THE BLIND WILL PROVIDE SUCH REHABILITATION SERVICES AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO CLIENTS TO AFFORD THEM THE GREATEST POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED IN THE PURSUIT, ATTAINMENT, AND RETENTION OF A VOCATIONAL OBJECTIVE.
TO PROVIDE PUBLIC INFORMATION WHICH WILL EDUCATE THE POTENTIAL CLIENT AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC AS WELL AS ENHANCE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR CLIENTS SERVED.
TO SECURE FIVE (5) MEDIA SPOTS OF PUBLIC SERVICE TIME (GEOGRAPHICALLY DISTRIBUTED TO COVER THE STATE) DURING FY-80.
Coffee With Judy/TV-3, (November) covering Central Mississippi.
Community Contact-TV-9 (January) covering North Mississippi.
Contemporary Issues-TV-7, (March) covering South Mississippi.
ETV PRESENTS... TV-29, (May) Statewide Coverage.
OPEN-LINE WXXX Radio. Covering Central Mississippi.

Planning at a level such as illustrated ought logically to be a systematic function of every VR agency. It allows individual, component and agency creativity in planning for the client's rehabilitation; it permits, because it is a written management plan, review and revision as necessary; and it gives the evaluator something to work with in the process of appraising agency activities.

It is obvious that evaluation can only measure that which exists to be measured. Planning through a management information system provides something to be measured. It is also obvious by the increased awareness in VR of the importance of evaluation that qualitative evaluation is the coming state of the art. Management information systems again deal with qualitative, measurable features.

Since evaluation is a recognized support function of VR; since evaluation in VR should produce outcomes that benefit the agencies in furthering their mission; and since evaluation is evidently here to stay, put the horse before the cart even if a bit of regression is necessary to do so--install management information systems in VR agencies prior to attempting to implement valid total program evaluation. You'll have something worth measuring and worth reporting.

BOOK REVIEW

A HANDBOOK FOR FOLLOW-UP STUDIES IN THE HUMAN SERVICES

BY KENNETH W. REAGLES, SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY, N.Y.:
THE ICD REHABILITATION AND RESEARCH CENTER

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The attempt to discuss the areas considered by Kenneth W. Reagles in A Handbook for Follow-Up Studies in the Human Services is welcomed by those designated the responsibility of evaluating human services. Reagles states that the book is "not intended as a guide for conducting follow-up studies, it is not merely a "cookbook;" there is liberal discussion of the reasons and rationale for various survey research methods." In accordance with the author's stated purpose, Dr. Reagles relays sound technical instruction evidenced by the wisdom gleaned from years of program evaluation experience. However, the Handbook does not stop at the technicalities of conceptualization, formulation, design and execution of follow-up studies. In addition to detailed precise information the Handbook offers "pointers." These "pointers," again evidence of experience (yes, Ken Reagles had a day when he began learning about program evaluation too!) are provided to the reader in a respectful manner. For the novice program evaluator the "pointers" elicit the "aha" response. For the more advanced program evaluator the "pointers" serve to substantiate the seriousness and depth of involvement required by program evaluation. Reagles' style of presentation demonstrates that follow-up studies not only require technical expertise, but also a willingness to draw from one's personal reservoir of creativity. Reagles demonstrates this continually throughout the Handbook. An appreciable addition to a program evaluation type book is the author's use of humor. Reagles' use of humor is exquisite! It serves to dispel the myths that program evaluation is conducted by egg-heads who memorize formulas, procedures and statistics.

The Handbook is designed primarily for those with little or basic understanding of program evaluation. The Handbook can serve well as an introductory teaching tool for new program evaluators or as a reference and task checklist for "old timers" in the program evaluation business.

Although major emphasis is placed on follow-up studies in the human service field, Reagles' style is exceptionally noteworthy for versatility. It affords applicability of material to a variety of disciplines desiring to conduct follow-up evaluation.

A technical presentation of material combined with the on-target proposition of content questions and the personal flare of this writer provides a conversational tone which enables readers to feel that Dr. Reagles is talking directly to them.

Although the primary purpose of this Handbook "is to enhance the capacity of such agencies (human services) to conduct follow-up studies," the skilled intertwinement of huge arenas of evaluation materials offers clarity, understanding and enjoyment of a once dreaded subject area. For this purpose each chapter in this book deserves separate comment.

Chapter one includes an introduction which addresses topics such as pressures and purposes of program evaluation, purpose of follow-up studies and informational needs studies. Reagles speaks to the issues of required data expectations and the realism of the amount of trained personnel needed to conduct evaluations. This chapter sets the tone for the serious recognition which program evaluation in human services deserves.

Chapter two discusses the steps in planning a follow-up study. The author provides an adapted list of general considerations for planning. The list begins with ways to decide on the purpose of the study and some 22 steps later concludes with questions on utilization of findings and recommendations for further study. A flow chart (p. 24) illustrates progressive steps in the formation of general questions about a program to specific items on a follow-up questionnaire. It is in this chapter that the author makes what reads as a simple statement but perhaps contains the essence of program evaluation integrity: "no evaluation is better than a bad evaluation." (p. 25)

Chapter three provides an informative discussion on the types of survey studies. Reagles offers descriptions of each type survey with listings of advantages and disadvantages for use. To complete what has already been a comprehensive presentation of the mailed questionnaire, personal interview, telephone interview and other data collection methods (observational approach, case file review, combinations) the author provides the reader with a magnificent model for evaluating the utility of a specific survey method (p. 60-61). The model lists the survey method and provides "considerations or features" for each with a + (advantage), - disadvantage and 0 (neither advantage nor disadvantage) rating. In this chapter the author cautions the potential user of surveys that "regardless of the approach or method of data collection, each is only an approximation of reality."

Chapter four entitled "Constructing an Instrument" provides detailed planning formats, considerations for questionnaire construction, principles of item construction and layout instructions. Chapter four is clear and concise. The clarity is partially contributed to by the numerous examples which follow each content area. Advantages and disadvantages for the use of a particular method are also listed. To round out a laudable explanation of instrument construction Reagles adds "a note on reliability and validity" (p. 97). While this section in no way serves as a full presentation of these concepts, it does discuss what program evaluation would agree are the most critical concerns of reliability and validity.

Chapter five addresses the subjects of pretesting and sample selection. Although a distinction is made between pretesting and pilot studies by some

researchers (as noted in the text p. 99), the author chooses to treat pretesting and pilot studies synonymously. Chapter five begins with the presentation of the purposes of pilot or pretests. Reagles raises important questions which require attention by those conducting follow-up studies. Emphasis is heavily stressed on the importance of pretesting or pilot testing. Again the author combines an exacting explanation and personal component to these concepts as exhibited in his statement:

> "The feeling of standing before hundreds or thousands of questionnaires to be mailed and to know that you are responsible is a humbling one; you will feel reassured at that moment if a pilot test has been conducted." (p. 104)

The next section of chapter five is devoted to the stages of the pretest. Statistical sampling is the topic for the remainder of chapter five. The focus is on the concepts, the different types sampling and their relationship to rehabilitation and other human services. For such a traditionally misunderstood and confused topic area, sampling is eloquently, explicitly and logically presented to the reader. A short introduction of basic terminology is presented followed by an in-depth discussion of simple random sampling, sampling variations, stratification, clustering and sample size. Supporting studies and relevant literature are cited throughout the chapter which allows pursuit of additional information should the reader desire a more in-depth study of a particular subject.

Chapter six is concerned with the variety of techniques that can be used prior to conducting the actual survey. This chapter illustrates the critical need to assert common sense in conjunction with any technical endeavor in research. The author's years of practical experience are perhaps most evident in this chapter. Reagles subsections chapter six into a discussion of: identifying the population and sample, advance notice of the survey, the use of incentives, the accompanying letter and mailing procedures, appearance of the questionnaire, sequence of mailing operation, follow-up efforts and special accommodations for specific disability groups. Throughout chapter six the reader is given point by point guidelines and practical suggestions which would definitely aid in the tasks of data collection. Substantive research supports many of the author's directives.

Chapter seven provides the nuts and bolts of personal and telephone interviews. The last fifteen pages of the chapter include an example of a survey. Although somewhat lengthy, the sample survey does illustrate many of the points previously discussed in the preceding chapters. In Reagles' explanation of personal interviews, the reader is constantly reminded that personal interviews do mean personal; that is person-to-person involvement. The author addresses topics varying from methodology of administration to suggestions for dress and apparel when doing an interview. In a few short pages Reagles has packed an enormous amount of information. However, the information is neither overwhelming nor confusing. It safely falls short of a potential program evaluation saturation point.

Chapter seven's nitty-gritty approach may be overwhelming. To some, however, it serves nicely to point out the meticulous detail involved in the assurance of successful personal interviews.

Chapter eight, the final chapter of the Handbook provides brief discussions on data collection, storage, analysis and utilization. This chapter gives the reader an overview on subject areas and seems to combine the necessary information to stimulate the reader to pursue additional in-depth literature relevant to his/her specific needs. Chapter eight's intent appears to be only to familiarize the reader with concepts such as daily return records, data-processing terminology, data coding format and coding. Reagles adds a section on data analyses and cleverly places an adapted table from Tatsuko and Tiedeman (1954) (p. 211) to help organize the attack method of selecting a statistical procedure to analyze data. This table is a saving feature to those not versed in statistical methods! Finally, the author presents the reader with a final note and one that is worthy of quote:

> "Follow-up studies represent an imposition upon those from whom data is collected; as such they must be undertaken with the utmost seriousness and consideration for the rights of the respondents."

Yes, that's what A Handbook for Follow-Up Studies in the Human Services is all about: seriousness and consideration with a little humor to keep you on your toes.

A Handbook for Follow-Up Studies in the Human Services is 222 pages (softcover) in double-spaced typed format. The Handbook is liberally illustrated with flow charts and examples and is available from ICD Rehabilitation and Research Center, New York, New York 10010.

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